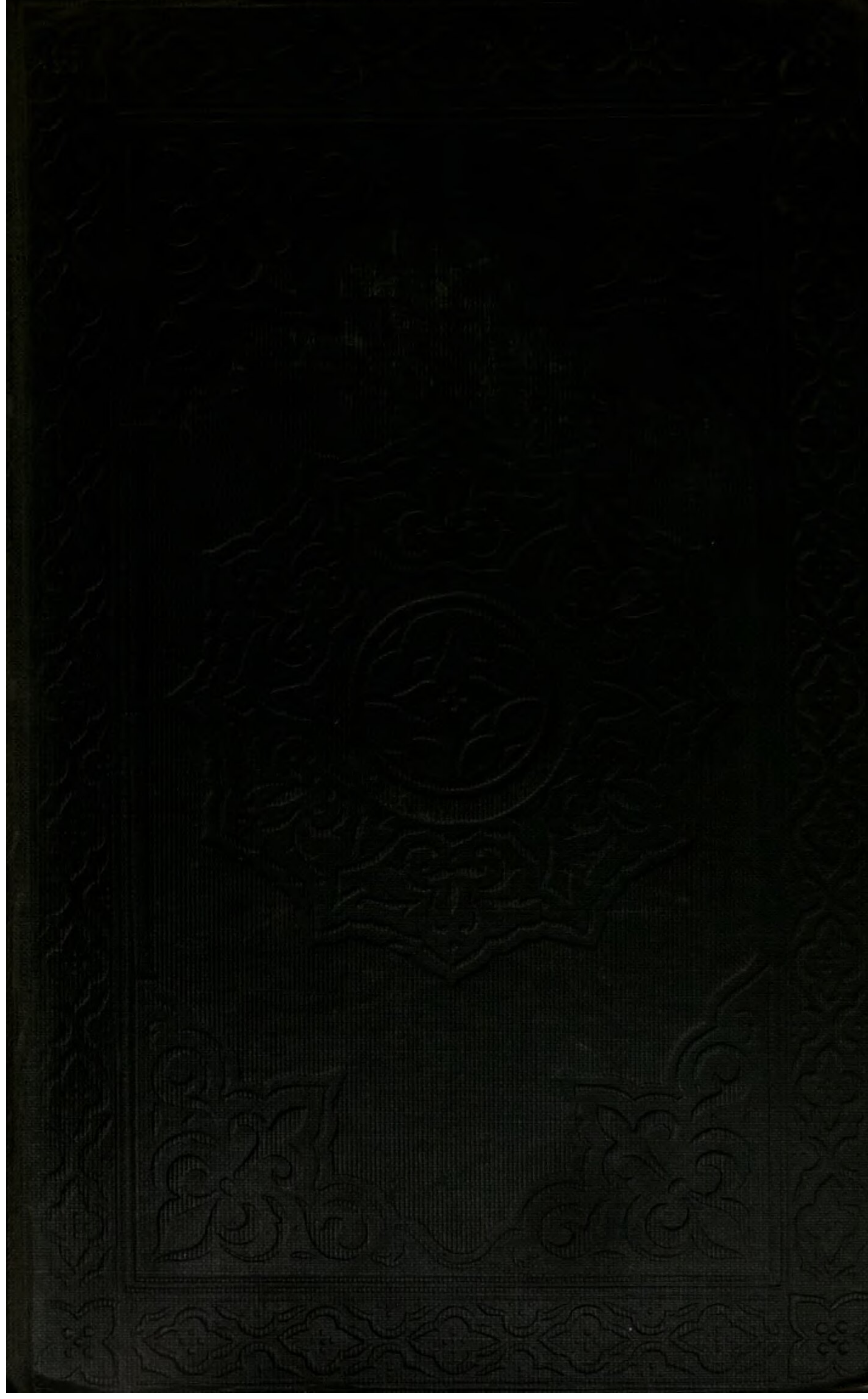




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WORKS

WASHINGTON IRVING.

IN TEN VOLUMES

VOL. X.

ALBANY: J. B. KNEELAND, 1854.

BY J. B. KNEELAND.

NEW-YORK: J. B. KNEELAND, 1854.

THE
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OF
WASHINGTON IRVING.

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VOL. X.

ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE.

CONQUEST OF FLORIDA.

LONDON:

HENRY G. BOHN, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1854.

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1851

THE
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CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE, U.S.A.,
IN THE
ROCKY MOUNTAINS AND THE FAR WEST.

DIGESTED FROM HIS JOURNAL AND ILLUSTRATED
FROM VARIOUS OTHER SOURCES.

BY
WASHINGTON IRVING.

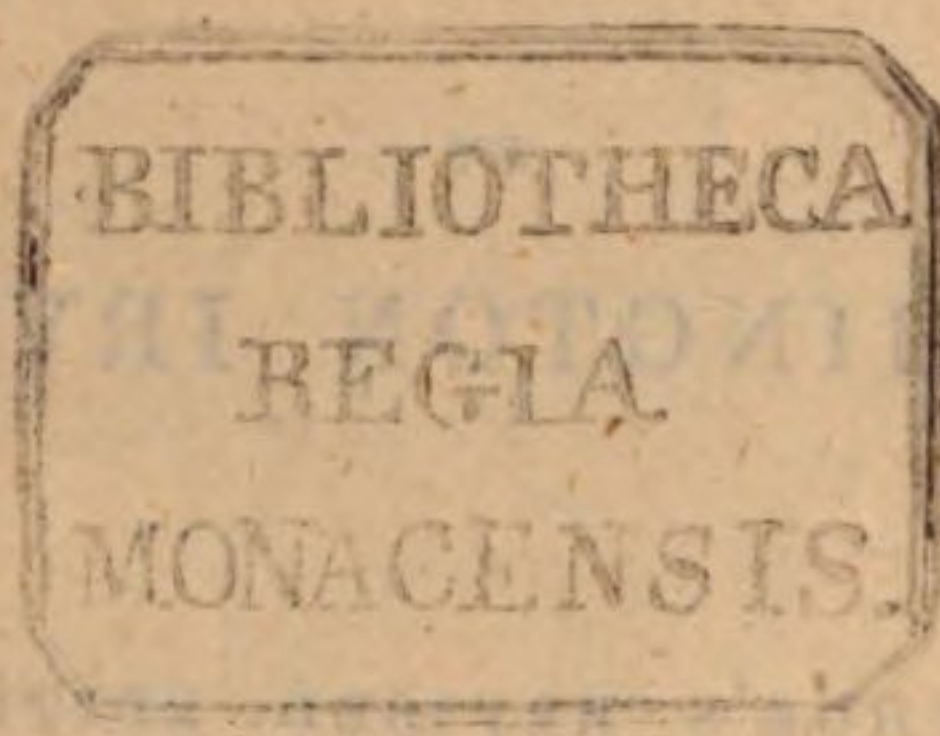
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LONDON
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1861

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INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

WHILE engaged in writing an account of the grand enterprise of ASTORIA, it was my practice to seek all kinds of oral information connected with the subject. Nowhere did I pick up more interesting particulars than at the table of Mr. John Jacob Astor; who, being the patriarch of the Fur Trade in the United States, was accustomed to have at his board various persons of adventurous turn, some of whom had been engaged in his own great undertaking; others, on their own account, had made expeditions to the Rocky Mountains and the waters of the Columbia.

Among these personages, one who peculiarly took my fancy, was Captain BONNEVILLE, of the United States army; who, in a rambling kind of enterprise, had strangely ingrafted the trapper and hunter upon the soldier. As his expeditions and adventures will form the leading theme of the following pages, a few biographical particulars concerning him may not be unacceptable.

Captain Bonneville is of French parentage. His father was a worthy old emigrant, who came to this country many years since, and took up his abode in New York. He is represented as a man not much calculated for the sordid struggle of a money-making world, but possessed of a happy temperament, a fertility of imagination, and a simplicity of heart, that made him proof against its rubs and trials. He was an excellent scholar; well acquainted with Latin and Greek, and fond of the modern classics. His book was his elysium; once immersed in the pages of Voltaire, Corneille, or Racine, or of his favourite English author, Shakspeare, he forgot the world and all its concerns. Often would he be seen in summer weather, seated under one of the trees on the Battery, or the portico of St. Paul's Church in Broadway, his bald head uncovered, his hat lying by his side, his eyes riveted to the page of his book, and his whole soul so engaged, as to lose all consciousness of the passing throng or the passing hour.

Captain Bonneville, it will be found, inherited something of his father's *bonhomie*, and his excitable imagination; though the latter was somewhat disciplined in early years, by mathematical studies. He was educated at our national Military Academy at West Point, where he acquitted himself very creditably; thence he entered the army, in which he has ever since continued.

The nature of our military service took him to the frontier, where, for a number of years, he was stationed at various posts in the Far West. Here he was brought into frequent intercourse with Indian traders, mountain trappers, and other pioneers of the wilderness; and became so excited by their tales of wild scenes and wild adventures, and their accounts of vast and magnificent regions as yet unexplored, that an expedition to the Rocky Mountains became the ardent desire of his heart, and an enterprise to explore untrodden tracts the leading object of his ambition.

By degrees he shaped this vague day-dream into a practical reality. Having made himself acquainted with all the requisites for a trading enterprise beyond the mountains, he determined to undertake it. A leave of absence, and a sanction of his expedition, was obtained from the major general in chief, on his offering to combine public utility with his private projects, and to collect statistical information for the War Department, concerning the wild countries and wild tribes he might visit in the course of his journeyings.

Nothing now was wanting to the darling project of the captain, but the ways and means. The expedition would require an outfit of many thousand dollars; a staggering obstacle to a soldier, whose capital is seldom anything more than his sword. Full of that buoyant hope, however, which belongs to the sanguine temperament, he repaired to New York, the great focus of American enterprise, where there are always funds ready for any scheme, however chimerical or romantic. Here he had the good fortune to meet with a gentleman of high respectability and influence, who had been his associate in boyhood, and who cherished a schoolfellow friendship for him. He took a general interest in the scheme of the captain; introduced him to commercial men of his acquaintance, and in a little while an association was formed, and the necessary funds were raised to carry the proposed measure into effect. One of the most efficient persons in this association was Mr. Alfred Seton, who, when quite a youth, had accompanied one of the expeditions sent out by Mr. Astor to his commercial establishments on the Columbia, and had distinguished himself by his activity and courage at one of the interior posts. Mr. Seton was one of the American youths who were at Astoria at the time of its surrender to the British, and who manifested such grief and indignation at seeing the flag of their country hauled down. The hope of seeing that flag once more planted on the shores of the Columbia, may have entered into his motives for engaging in the present enterprise.

Thus backed and provided, Captain Bonneville undertook his expedition into the Far West, and was soon beyond the Rocky Mountains. Year after year elapsed without his return. The term of his leave of absence expired, yet no report was made of him at head quarters at Washington. He was considered virtually dead or lost, and his name was stricken from the army list.

It was in the autumn of 1835, at the country seat of Mr. John Jacob Astor, at Hellgate, that I first met with Captain Bonneville. He was then just returned from a residence of upwards of three years among the mountains, and was on his way to report himself at head quarters, in the hopes of being reinstated in the service. From all that I could learn, his wanderings in the wilderness, though they had gratified his curiosity and his love of adventure, had not much benefited his fortunes. Like Corporal Trim in his campaigns, he had "satisfied the sentiment," and that was all. In fact, he was too much of the frank, free-hearted soldier, and had inherited too much of his father's temperament, to make a scheming trapper or a thrifty bargainer. There was something in the whole appearance of the captain that prepossessed me in his favour. He was of the middle size, well made and well set; and a military frock of foreign cut, that had seen service, gave him a look of compactness. His countenance was frank, open, and engaging; well browned by the sun, and had something of a French expression. He had a pleasant black eye, a high forehead, and, while he kept his hat on, the look of a man in the jocund prime of his days; but the moment his head was uncovered, a bald crown gained him credit for a few more years than he was really entitled to.

Being extremely curious at the time, about everything connected with the Far West, I addressed numerous questions to him. They drew from him a number of extremely striking details, which were given with mingled modesty and frankness; and in a gentleness of manner, and a soft tone of voice, contrasting singularly with the wild, and often startling nature of his themes. It was difficult to conceive the mild, quiet-looking personage before you, the actual hero of the stirring scenes related.

In the course of three or four months, happening to be at the city of Washington, I again came upon the captain, who was attending the slow adjustment of his affairs with the War Department. I found him quartered with a worthy brother in arms, a major in the army. Here he was writing at a table, covered with maps and papers, in the centre of a large barrack room, fancifully decorated with Indian arms, and trophies, and war dresses, and the skins of various wild animals, and hung round with pictures of Indian games and ceremonies, and scenes of war and hunting. In a word, the captain was beguiling the tediousness of attendance at court, by an attempt at authorship; and was rewriting and extending his travelling notes, and making maps of the regions he had explored. As he sat at the table, in this curious apartment, with his high bald head of somewhat foreign cast, he reminded me of some of those antique pictures of authors that I have seen in old Spanish volumes.

The result of his labours was a mass of manuscript, which he subsequently put at my disposal, to fit it for publication and bring it before the world. I found it full of interesting details of life among the mountains, and of the singular castes and races, both white men and red men, among whom he had sojourned. It bore, too, throughout, the impress of his character, his *bon-homme*, his kindliness of spirit, and his susceptibility to the grand and beautiful.

That manuscript has formed the staple of the following work. I have occasionally interwoven facts and details, gathered from various sources, especially from the conversations and journals of some of the captain's contemporaries, who were actors in the scenes he describes. I have also given it a tone and colouring drawn from my own observation, during an excursion into the Indian country beyond the bounds of civilization; as I before observed, however, the work is substantially the narrative of the worthy captain, and many of its most graphic passages are but little varied from his own language.

I shall conclude this notice by a dedication which he had made of his manuscript to his hospitable brother in arms, in whose quarters I found him occupied in his literary labours; it is a dedication which, I believe, possesses the qualities, not always found in complimentary documents of the kind, of being sincere, and being merited.

TO

JAMES HARVEY HOOK,

MAJOR, U. S. A.,

WHOSE JEALOUSY OF ITS HONOUR,

WHOSE ANXIETY FOR ITS INTERESTS, AND

WHOSE SENSIBILITY FOR ITS WANTS,

HAVE ENDEARED HIM TO THE SERVICE AS

The Soldier's Friend;

AND WHOSE GENERAL AMENITY, CONSTANT CHEERFULNESS,

DISINTERESTED HOSPITALITY, AND UNWEARIED

BENEVOLENCE, ENTITLE HIM TO THE STILL LOFTIER TITLE OF

THE FRIEND OF MAN,

THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED,

New York, 1843.

ETC.

ADVENTURES
OF
CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE.

CHAPTER I.

IN a recent work we have given an account of the grand enterprise of Mr. John Jacob Astor, to establish an American emporium for the fur trade at the mouth of the Columbia, or Oregon River; of the failure of that enterprise through the capture of Astoria by the British, in 1814; and of the way in which the control of the trade of the Columbia and its dependencies fell into the hands of the Northwest Company. We have stated, likewise, the unfortunate supineness of the American government, in neglecting the application of Mr. Astor for the protection of the American flag, and a small military force, to enable him to reinstate himself in the possession of Astoria at the return of peace; when the post was formally given up by the British government, though still occupied by the Northwest Company. By that supineness the sovereignty in the country has been virtually lost to the United States; and it will cost both governments much trouble and difficulty to settle matters on that just and rightful footing, on which they would readily have been placed had the proposition of Mr. Astor been attended to. We shall now state a few particulars of subsequent events, so as to lead the reader up to the period of which we are about to treat, and to prepare him for the circumstances of our narrative.

In consequence of the apathy and neglect of the American government, Mr. Astor abandoned all thoughts of regaining Astoria, and made no further attempt to extend his enterprises beyond the Rocky Mountains; and the Northwest Company considered themselves the lords of the country. They did not long enjoy unmolested the sway which they had somewhat surreptitiously attained. A fierce competition ensued between them and their old rivals, the Hudson's Bay Company; which

was carried on at great cost and sacrifice, and occasionally with the loss of life. It ended in the ruin of most of the partners of the Northwest Company; and the merging of the relics of that establishment, in 1821, in the rival association. From that time, the Hudson's Bay Company enjoyed a monopoly of the Indian trade from the coast of the Pacific to the Rocky Mountains, and for a considerable extent north and south. They removed their emporium from Astoria to Fort Vancouver, a strong post on the left bank of the Columbia River, about sixty miles from its mouth; whence they furnished their interior posts, and sent forth their brigades of trappers.

The Rocky Mountains formed a vast barrier between them and the United States, and their stern and awful defiles, their rugged valleys and the great western plains watered by their rivers, remained almost a terra incognita to the American trapper. The difficulties experienced in 1808, by Mr. Henry of the Missouri Company, the first American who trapped upon the head-waters of the Columbia, and the frightful hardships sustained by Wilson P. Hunt, Ramsay Crooks, Robert Stuart, and other intrepid Astorians, in their ill-fated expeditions across the mountains, appeared for a time to check all further enterprise in that direction. The American traders contented themselves with following up the head branches of the Missouri, the Yellowstone, and other rivers and streams on the Atlantic side of the mountains, but forbore to attempt those great snow-crowned sierras.

One of the first to revive these tramontane expeditions was General Ashley, of Missouri, a man whose courage and achievements in the prosecution of his enterprises have rendered him famous in the Far West. In conjunction with Mr. Henry, already mentioned, he established a post on the banks of the Yellowstone River, in 1822, and in the following year pushed a resolute band of trappers across the mountains to the banks of the Green River or Colorado of the West, often known by the Indian name of the Seeds-ke-dee Agie*. This attempt was followed up and sustained by others, until in 1825 a footing was secured, and a complete system of trapping organized beyond the mountains.

It is difficult to do justice to the courage, fortitude, and perseverance of the pioneers of the fur trade, who conducted these early expeditions, and first broke their way through a

* That is, the Prairie Hen River. Agie in the Crow language signifies river.

wilderness where everything was calculated to deter and dismay them. They had to traverse the most dreary and desolate mountains, and barren and trackless wastes uninhabited by man, or occasionally infested by predatory and cruel savages. They knew nothing of the country beyond the verge of their horizon, and had to gather information as they wandered. They beheld volcanic plains stretching around them, and ranges of mountains piled up to the clouds, and glistening with eternal frost; but knew nothing of their defiles, nor how they were to be penetrated or traversed. They launched themselves in frail canoes on rivers, without knowing whither their swift currents would carry them, or what rocks, and shoals, and rapids they might encounter in their course. They had to be continually on the alert, too, against the mountain tribes, who beset every defile, laid ambuscades in their path, or attacked them in their night encampments; so that, of the hardy bands of trappers that first entered into these regions, three-fifths are said to have fallen by the hands of savage foes.

In this wild and warlike school a number of leaders have sprung up, originally in the employ, subsequently partners, of Ashley; among these we may mention Smith, Fitzpatrick, Bridger, Robert Campbell, and William Sublette, whose adventures and exploits partake of the wildest spirit of romance. The association commenced by General Ashley underwent various modifications. That gentleman having acquired sufficient fortune, sold out his interest and retired; and the leading spirit that succeeded him was Captain William Sublette; a man worthy of note, as his name has become renowned in frontier story. He is a native of Kentucky, and of game descent; his maternal grandfather, Colonel Wheatley, a companion of Boon, having been one of the pioneers of the West, celebrated in Indian warfare, and killed in one of the contests of the "Bloody Ground." We shall frequently have occasion to speak of this Sublette, and always to the credit of his game qualities. In 1830, the association took the name of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, of which Captain Sublette and Robert Campbell were prominent members.

In the meantime, the success of this company attracted the attention and excited the emulation of the American Fur Company, and brought them once more into the field of their ancient enterprise. Mr. Astor, the founder of the association,

had retired from busy life, and the concerns of the company were ably managed by Mr. Ramsay Crooks, of Snake River renown, who still officiates as its president. A competition immediately ensued between the two companies, for the trade with the mountain tribes, and the trapping of the head-waters of the Columbia, and the other great tributaries of the Pacific. Beside the regular operations of these formidable rivals, there have been from time to time desultory enterprises, or rather experiments, of minor associations, or of adventurous individuals, beside roving bands of independent trappers, who either hunt for themselves, or engage for a single season, in the service of one or other of the main companies.

The consequence is, that the Rocky Mountains and the ulterior regions, from the Russian possessions in the north, down to the Spanish settlements of California, have been traversed and ransacked in every direction by bands of hunters and Indian traders; so that there is scarcely a mountain pass, or defile, that is not known and threaded in their restless migrations, nor a nameless stream that is not haunted by the lonely trapper.

The American fur companies keep no established posts beyond the mountains. Everything there is regulated by resident partners; that is to say, partners who reside in the tramontane country, but who move about from place to place, either with Indian tribes, whose traffic they wish to monopolize, or with main bodies of their own men, whom they employ in trading and trapping. In the meantime, they detach bands, or "brigades" as they are termed, of trappers in various directions, assigning to each a portion of country as a hunting, or trapping ground. In the months of June and July, when there is an interval between the hunting seasons, a general rendezvous is held, at some designated place in the mountains, where the affairs of the past year are settled by the resident partners, and the plans for the following year arranged.

To this rendezvous repair the various brigades of trappers from their widely-separated hunting grounds, bringing in the products of their year's campaign. Hither, also, repair the Indian tribes accustomed to traffic their peltries with the company. Bands of free trappers resort hither also, to sell the furs they have collected; or to engage their services for the next hunting season.

To this rendezvous the company sends annually a convoy of supplies from its establishment on the Atlantic frontier, under the guidance of some experienced partner or officer. On the arrival of this convoy, the resident partner at the rendezvous depends, to set all his next year's machinery in motion.

Now as the rival companies keep a vigilant eye upon each other, and are anxious to discover each other's plans and movements, they generally contrive to hold their annual assemblages at no great distance apart. An eager competition exists also between their respective convoys of supplies, which shall first reach its place of rendezvous. For this purpose, they set off with the first appearance of grass on the Atlantic frontier, and push with all diligence for the mountains. The company that can first open its tempting supplies of coffee, tobacco, ammunition, scarlet cloth, blankets, bright shawls, and glittering trinkets, has the greatest chance to get all the peltries and furs of the Indians and free trappers, and to engage their services for the next season. It is able, also, to fit out and dispatch its own trappers the soonest, so as to get the start of its competitors, and to have the first dash into the hunting and trapping grounds.

A new species of strategy has sprung out of this hunting and trapping competition. The constant study of the rival bands is to forestall and outwit each other; to supplant each other in the good-will and custom of the Indian tribes; to cross each other's plans; to mislead each other as to routes; in a word, next to his own advantage, the study of the Indian trader is the disadvantage of his competitor.

The influx of this wandering trade has had its effects on the habits of the mountain tribes. They have found the trapping of the beaver their most profitable species of hunting; and the traffic with the white man has opened to them sources of luxury of which they previously had no idea. The introduction of fire-arms has rendered them more successful hunters, but, at the same time, more formidable foes; some of them, incorrigibly savage and warlike in their nature, have found the expeditions of the fur traders, grand objects of profitable adventure. To waylay and harass a band of trappers with their pack-horses, when embarrassed in the rugged defiles of the mountains, has become as favourite an exploit with these Indians as the plunder of a caravan to the Arab of the desert. The Crows and Blackfeet, who were such terrors in the path

of the early adventurers to Astoria, still continue their predatory habits, but seem to have brought them to greater system. They know the routes and resorts of the trappers; where to waylay them on their journeys; where to find them in the hunting seasons, and where to hover about them in winter quarters. The life of a trapper, therefore, is a perpetual state militant, and he must sleep with his weapons in his hands.

A new order of trappers and traders, also, have grown out of this system of things. In the old times of the great Northwest Company, when the trade in furs was pursued chiefly about the lakes and rivers, the expeditions were carried on in batteaux and canoes. The voyageurs or boatmen were the rank and file in the service of the trader, and even the hardy "men of the north," those great rufflers and game birds, were fain to be paddled from point to point of their migrations.

A totally different class has now sprung up;—"the Mountaineers," the traders and trappers that scale the vast mountain chains, and pursue their hazardous vocations amidst their wild recesses. They move from place to place on horseback. The equestrian exercises, therefore, in which they are engaged, the nature of the countries they traverse, vast plains and mountains, pure and exhilarating in atmospheric qualities, seem to make them physically and mentally a more lively and mercurial race than the fur traders and trappers of former days, the self-vaunting "men of the north." A man who bestrides a horse, must be essentially different from a man who cowers in a canoe. We find them, accordingly, hardy, lithe, vigorous, and active; extravagant in word, in thought, and deed; heedless of hardship; daring of danger; prodigal of the present, and thoughtless of the future.

A difference is to be perceived even between these mountain hunters and those of the lower regions along the waters of the Missouri. The latter, generally French creoles, live comfortably in cabins and log-huts, well sheltered from the inclemencies of the seasons. They are within the reach of frequent supplies from the settlements; their life is comparatively free from danger, and from most of the vicissitudes of the upper wilderness. The consequence is, that they are less hardy, self-dependent and game-spirited, than the mountaineer. If the latter by chance comes among them on his way to and from the settlements, he is like a game-cock among the com-

mon roosters of the poultry-yard. Accustomed to live in tents, or to bivouac in the open air, he despises the comforts and is impatient of the confinement of the log-house. If his meal is not ready in season, he takes his rifle, hies to the forest or prairie, shoots his own game, lights his fire, and cooks his repast. With his horse and his rifle, he is independent of the world, and spurns at all its restraints. The very superintendents at the lower posts will not put him to mess with the common men, the hirelings of the establishment, but treat him as something superior.

There is, perhaps, no class of men upon the face of the earth, says Captain Bonneville, who lead a life of more continued exertion, peril, and excitement, and who are more enamoured of their occupations, than the free trappers of the West. No toil, no danger, no privation can turn the trapper from his pursuit. His passionate excitement at times resembles a mania. In vain may the most vigilant and cruel savages beset his path; in vain may rocks, and precipices, and wintry torrents oppose his progress; let but a single track of a beaver meet his eye, and he forgets all dangers and defies all difficulties. At times, he may be seen with his traps on his shoulder, buffeting his way across rapid streams, amidst floating blocks of ice: at other times, he is to be found with his traps swung on his back, clambering the most rugged mountains, scaling or descending the most frightful precipices, searching, by routes inaccessible to the horse, and never before trodden by white man, for springs and lakes unknown to his comrades, and where he may meet with his favourite game. Such is the mountaineer, the hardy trapper of the West; and such, as we have slightly sketched it, is the wild, Robin Hood kind of life, with all its strange and motley populace, now existing in full vigour among the Rocky Mountains.

Having thus given the reader some idea of the actual state of the fur trade in the interior of our vast continent, and made him acquainted with the wild chivalry of the mountains, we will no longer delay the introduction of Captain Bonneville and his band into this field of their enterprize, but launch them at once upon the perilous plains of the Far West.

CHAPTER II.

It was on the first of May, 1832, that Captain Bonneville took his departure from the frontier post of Fort Osage, on the Missouri. He had enlisted a party of one hundred and ten men, most of whom had been in the Indian country, and some of whom were experienced hunters and trappers. Fort Osage, and other places on the borders of the western wilderness, abound with characters of the kind, ready for any expedition.

The ordinary mode of transportation in these great inland expeditions of the fur traders is on mules and pack-horses; but Captain Bonneville substituted wagons. Though he was to travel through a trackless wilderness, yet the greater part of his route would lie across open plains, destitute of forests, and where wheel carriages can pass in every direction. The chief difficulty occurs in passing the deep ravines cut through the prairies by streams and winter torrents. Here it is often necessary to dig a road down the banks, and to make bridges for the wagons.

In transporting his baggage in vehicles of this kind, Captain Bonneville thought he would save the great delay caused every morning by packing the horses, and the labour of unpacking in the evening. Fewer horses also would be required, and less risk incurred of their wandering away, or being frightened or carried off by the Indians. The wagons, also, would be more easily defended, and might form a kind of fortification in case of attack in the open prairies. A train of twenty wagons, drawn by oxen, or by four mules or horses each, and laden with merchandise, ammunition, and provisions, were disposed in two columns in the centre of the party, which was equally divided into a van and a rear-guard. As sub-leaders, or lieutenants in his expedition, Captain Bonneville had made choice of Mr. I. R. Walker and Mr. M. S. Cerré. The former was a native of Tennessee, about six feet high, strong built, dark complexioned, brave in spirit, though mild in manners. He had resided for many years in Missouri, on the frontier; had been among the earliest adventurers to Santa Fé, where he went to trap beaver, and was taken by the Spaniards. Being liberated, he engaged with the Spaniards and Sioux Indians in a war against the Pawnees; then returned to Missouri, and

had acted by turns as sheriff, trader, trapper, until he was enlisted as a leader by Captain Bonneville.

Cerré, his other leader, had likewise been in expeditions to Santa Fé, in which he had endured much hardship. He was of the middle size, light complexioned, and though but about twenty-five years of age, was considered an experienced Indian trader. It was a great object with Captain Bonneville to get to the mountains before the summer heats and summer flies should render the travelling across the prairies distressing; and before the annual assemblages of people connected with the fur trade, should have broken up, and dispersed to the hunting grounds.

The two rival associations already mentioned, the American Fur Company and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, had their several places of rendezvous for the present year at no great distance apart, in Pierre's Hole, a deep valley in the heart of the mountains, and thither Captain Bonneville intended to shape his course.

It is not easy to do justice to the exulting feelings of the worthy captain, at finding himself at the head of a stout band of hunters, trappers, and woodmen; fairly launched on the broad prairies, with his face to the boundless West. The tamest inhabitant of cities, the veriest spoiled child of civilization, feels his heart dilate and his pulse beat high, on finding himself on horseback in the glorious wilderness; what then must be the excitement of one whose imagination had been stimulated by a residence on the frontier, and to whom the wilderness was a region of romance!

His hardy followers partook of his excitement. Most of them had already experienced the wild freedom of savage life, and looked forward to a renewal of past scenes of adventure and exploit. Their very appearance and equipment exhibited a piebald mixture, half civilized and half savage. Many of them looked more like Indians than white men, in their garbs and accoutrements, and their very horses were caparisoned in barbaric style, with fantastic trappings. The outset of a band of adventurers on one of these expeditions is always animated and joyous. The welkin rang with their shouts and yelps, after the manner of the savages; and with boisterous jokes and light-hearted laughter. As they passed the straggling hamlets and solitary cabins that fringe the skirts of the frontier, they would startle their inmates by

Indian yells and war-whoops, or regale them with grotesque feats of horsemanship, well suited to their half savage appearance. Most of these abodes were inhabited by men who had themselves been in similar expeditions; they welcomed the travellers, therefore, as brother trappers, treated them with a hunter's hospitality, and cheered them with an honest God speed, at parting.

And here we would remark a great difference, in point of character and quality, between the two classes of trappers, the "American" and "French," as they are called in contradistinction. The latter is meant to designate the French creole of Canada or Louisiana; the former, the trapper of the old American stock, from Kentucky, Tennessee, and others of the western states. The French trapper is represented as a lighter, softer, more self-indulgent kind of man. He must have his Indian wife, his lodge, and his petty conveniences. He is gay and thoughtless, takes little heed of landmarks, depends upon his leaders and companions to think for the common weal, and, if left to himself, is easily perplexed and lost.

The American trapper stands by himself, and is peerless for the service of the wilderness. Drop him in the midst of a prairie, or in the heart of the mountains, and he is never at a loss. He notices every landmark; can retrace his route through the most monotonous plains, or the most perplexed labyrinths of the mountains; no danger nor difficulty can appal him, and he scorns to complain under any privation. In equipping the two kinds of trappers, the Creole and Canadian are apt to prefer the light fusee; the American always grasps his rifle; he despises what he calls the "shot-gun." We give these estimates on the authority of a trader of long experience, and a foreigner by birth. "I consider one American," said he, "equal to three Canadians in point of sagacity, aptness at resources, self-dependence, and fearlessness of spirit. In fact, no one can cope with him as a stark tramper of the wilderness."

Beside the two classes of trappers just mentioned, Captain Bonneville had enlisted several Delaware Indians in his employ on whose hunting qualifications he placed great reliance.

On the 6th of May the travellers passed the last border habitation, and bade a long farewell to the ease and security of civilization. The buoyant and clamorous spirits with which they had commenced their march, gradually subsided as they

entered upon its difficulties. They found the prairies saturated with the heavy cold rains, prevalent in certain seasons of the year in this part of the country, the wagon wheels sank deep in the mire, the horses were often to the fetlock, and both steed and rider were completely jaded by the evening of the 12th, when they reached the Kansas River; a fine stream about three hundred yards wide, entering the Missouri from the south. Though fordable in almost every part at the end of summer and during the autumn, yet it was necessary to construct a raft for the transportation of the wagons and effects. All this was done in the course of the following day, and by evening, the whole party arrived at the agency of the Kansas tribe. This was under the superintendence of General Clarke, brother of the celebrated traveller of the same name, who, with Lewis, made the first expedition down the waters of the Columbia. He was living like a patriarch, surrounded by labourers and interpreters, all snugly housed, and provided with excellent farms. The functionary next in consequence to the agent was the blacksmith, a most important, and, indeed, indispensable personage in a frontier community. The Kansas resemble the Osages in features, dress, and language; they raise corn and hunt the buffalo, ranging the Kansas River and its tributary streams; at the time of the captain's visit, they were at war with the Pawnees of the Nebraska, or Platte River.

The unusual sight of a train of wagons, caused quite a sensation among these savages; who thronged about the caravan, examining everything minutely, and asking a thousand questions: exhibiting a degree of excitability and a lively curiosity, totally opposite to that apathy with which their race is so often reproached.

The personage who most attracted the captain's attention at this place was "White Plume," the Kansas chief, and they soon became good friends. White Plume (we are pleased with his chivalrous *soubriquet*) inhabited a large stone house, built for him by order of the American government: but the establishment had not been carried out in corresponding style. It might be palace without, but it was wigwam within; so that, between the stateliness of his mansion, and the squalidness of his furniture, the gallant White Plume presented some such whimsical incongruity as we see in the gala equipments of an Indian chief, on a treaty-making embassy at Washington, who

has been generously decked out in cocked hat and military coat, in contrast to his breech-clout and leathern leggings; being grand officer at top, and ragged Indian at bottom.

White Plume was so taken with the courtesy of the captain, and pleased with one or two presents received from him, that he accompanied him a day's journey on his march, and passed a night in his camp, on the margin of a small stream. The method of encamping generally observed by the captain was as follows: the twenty wagons were disposed in a square, at the distance of thirty-three feet from each other. In every interval there was a mess stationed; and each mess had its fire, where the men cooked, ate, gossiped, and slept. The horses were placed in the centre of the square, with a guard stationed over them at night.

The horses were "side lined," as it is termed: that is to say, the fore and hind foot on the same side of the animal were tied together, so as to be within eighteen inches of each other. A horse thus fettered is for a time sadly embarrassed, but soon becomes sufficiently accustomed to the restraint to move about slowly. It prevents his wandering; and his being easily carried off at night by lurking Indians. When a horse that is "foot free" is tied to one thus secured, the latter forms, as it were, a pivot, round which the other runs and curvets, in case of alarm.

The encampment of which we are speaking, presented a striking scene. The various mess-fires were surrounded by picturesque groups, standing, sitting, and reclining; some busied in cooking, others in cleaning their weapons: while the frequent laugh told that the rough joke, or merry story was going on. In the middle of the camp, before the principal lodge, sat the two chieftains, Captain Bonneville and White Plume, in soldier-like communion, the captain delighted with the opportunity of meeting, on social terms, with one of the red warriors of the wilderness, the unsophisticated children of nature. The latter was squatted on his buffalo robe, his strong features and red skin glaring in the broad light of a blazing fire, while he recounted astounding tales of the bloody exploits of his tribe and himself, in their wars with the Pawnees; for there are no old soldiers more given to long campaigning stories, than Indian "braves."

The feuds of White Plume, however, had not been confined to the red men; he had much to say of brushes with bee

hunters, a class of offenders for whom he seemed to cherish a particular abhorrence. As the species of hunting prosecuted by these worthies is not laid down in any of the ancient books of venerie, and is, in fact, peculiar to our western frontier, a word or two on the subject may not be unacceptable to the reader.

The bee hunter is generally some settler on the verge of the prairies; a long lank fellow, of fever and ague complexion, acquired from living on new soil, and in a hut built of green logs. In the autumn, when the harvest is over, these frontier settlers form parties of two or three, and prepare for a bee hunt. Having provided themselves with a wagon, and a number of empty casks, they sally off, armed with their rifles, into the wilderness, directing their course east, west, north, or south, without any regard to the ordinance of the American government, which strictly forbids all trespass upon the lands belonging to the Indian tribes.

The belts of woodland that traverse the lower prairies, and border the rivers, are peopled by innumerable swarms of wild bees, which make their hives in hollow trees, and fill them with honey tolled from the rich flowers of the prairies. The bees, according to popular assertion, are migrating like the settlers, to the west. An Indian trader, well experienced in the country, informs us that within ten years that he has passed in the Far West, the bee has advanced westward above a hundred miles. It is said on the Missouri that the wild turkey and the wild bee go up the river together: neither are found in the upper regions. It is but recently that the wild turkey has been killed on the Nebraska, or Platte; and his travelling competitor, the wild bee, appeared there about the same time.

Be all this as it may: the course of our party of bee hunters, is to make a wide circuit through the woody river bottoms, and the patches of forest on the prairies, marking, as they go out, every tree in which they have detected a hive. These marks are generally respected by any other bee hunter that should come upon their track. When they have marked sufficient to fill all their casks, they turn their faces homeward, cut down the trees as they proceed, and, having loaded their wagon with honey and wax, return well pleased to the settlements.

Now it so happens that the Indians relish wild honey as

highly as do the white men, and are the more delighted with this natural luxury from its having, in many instances, but recently made its appearance in their lands. The consequence is, numberless disputes and conflicts between them and the bee hunters: and often a party of the latter, returning, laden with rich spoil, from one of their forays, are apt to be waylaid by the native lords of the soil; their honey to be seized, their harness cut to pieces, and themselves left to find their way home the best way they can, happy to escape with no greater personal harm than a sound rib-roasting.

Such were the marauders of whose offences the gallant White Plume made the most bitter complaint. They were chiefly the settlers of the western part of Missouri, who are the most famous bee hunters on the frontier, and whose favourite hunting ground lies within the lands of the Kansas tribe. According to the account of White Plume, however, matters were pretty fairly balanced between him and the offenders; he having as often treated them to a taste of the bitter, as they had robbed him of the sweets.

It is but justice to this gallant chief to say that he gave proofs of having acquired some of the lights of civilization from his proximity to the whites, as was evinced in his knowledge of driving a bargain. He required hard cash in return for some corn with which he supplied the worthy captain, and left the latter at a loss which most to admire, his native chivalry as a brave, or his acquired adroitness as a trader.

CHAPTER III.

FROM the middle to the end of May, Captain Bonneville pursued a western course over vast undulating plains, destitute of tree or shrub, rendered miry by occasional rain, and cut up by deep water-courses, where they had to dig roads for their wagons down the soft crumbling banks, and to throw bridges across the streams. The weather had attained the summer heat; the thermometer standing about fifty-seven degrees in the morning, early, but rising to about ninety degrees at noon. The incessant breezes, however, which sweep these vast plains, render the heats endurable. Game was scanty, and they had to eke out their scanty fare with wild roots and vegetables, such as the Indian potato, the wild

onion, and the prairie tomato, and they met with quantities of "red root," from which the hunters make a very palatable beverage. The only human being that crossed their path was a Kansas warrior, returning from some solitary expedition of bravado or revenge, bearing a Pawnee scalp as a trophy.

The country gradually rose as they proceeded westward, and their route took them over high ridges, commanding wide and beautiful prospects. The vast plain was studded on the west with innumerable hills of conical shape, such as are seen north of the Arkansas River. These hills have their summits apparently cut off about the same elevation, so as to leave flat surfaces at top. It is conjectured by some that the whole country may originally have been of the altitude of these tabular hills; but through some process of nature may have sunk to its present level; these insulated eminences being protected by broad foundations of solid rock.

Captain Bonneville mentions another geological phenomenon north of Red River, where the surface of the earth, in considerable tracts of country, is covered with broad slabs of sandstone, having the form and position of grave-stones, and looking as if they had been forced up by some subterranean agitation. "The resemblance," says he "which these very remarkable spots have in many places to old churchyards is curious in the extreme. One might almost fancy himself among the tombs of the pre-Adamites."

On the 2nd of June, they arrived on the main stream of the Nebraska or Platte River; twenty-five miles below the head of the Great Island. The low banks of this river give it an appearance of great width. Captain Bonneville measured it in one place, and found it twenty-two hundred yards from bank to bank. Its depth was from three to six feet, the bottom full of quicksands. The Nebraska is studded with islands covered with that species of poplar called the cotton-wood tree. Keeping up along the course of this river for several days, they were obliged, from the scarcity of game, to put themselves upon short allowance, and, occasionally, to kill a steer. They bore their daily labours and privations, however, with great good humour, taking their tone, in all probability, from the buoyant spirit of their leader. "If the weather was inclement," says the captain, "we watched the clouds, and hoped for a sight of the

blue sky and the merry sun. If food was scanty, we regaled ourselves with the hope of soon falling in with herds of buffalo, and having nothing to do but slay and eat." We doubt whether the genial captain is not describing the cheeriness of his own breast, which gave a cheery aspect to every thing around him.

There certainly were evidences, however, that the country was not always equally destitute of game. At one place, they observed a field decorated with buffalo skulls, arranged in circles, curves, and other mathematical figures, as if for some mystic rite or ceremony. They were almost innumerable, and seemed to have been a vast hecatomb offered up in thanksgiving to the Great Spirit for some signal success in the chase.

On the 11th of June, they came to the fork of the Nebraska, where it divides itself into two equal and beautiful streams. One of these branches rises in the west-southwest, near the head waters of the Arkansas. Up the course of this branch, as Captain Bonneville was well aware, lay the route to the Camanche and Kioway Indians, and to the northern Mexican settlements; of the other branch he knew nothing. Its sources might lie among wild and inaccessible cliffs, and tumble and foam down rugged defiles and over craggy precipices; but its direction was in the true course, and up this stream he determined to prosecute his route to the Rocky Mountains. Finding it impossible, from quicksands and other dangerous impediments, to cross the river in this neighbourhood, he kept up along the south fork for two days, merely seeking a safe fording place. At length he encamped, caused the bodies of the wagons to be dislodged from the wheels, covered with buffalo hides, and besmeared with a compound of tallow and ashes; thus forming rude boats. In these, they ferried their effects across the stream, which was six hundred yards wide, with a swift and strong current. Three men were in each boat, to manage it; others waded across, pushing the barks before them. Thus all crossed in safety. A march of nine miles took them over high rolling prairies to the north fork; their eyes being regaled with the welcome sight of herds of buffalo at a distance, some careering the plain, others grazing and reposing in the natural meadows.

Skirting along the north fork for a day or two, excessively annoyed by mosquitoes and buffalo gnats, they reached, in

the evening of the 17th, a small but beautiful grove, from which issued the confused notes of singing birds, the first they had heard since crossing the boundary of Missouri. After so many days of weary travelling, through a naked, monotonous and silent country, it was delightful once more to hear the song of the bird, and to behold the verdure of the grove. It was a beautiful sunset, and a sight of the glowing rays, mantling the tree-tops and rustling branches, gladdened every heart. They pitched their camp in the grove, kindled their fires, partook merrily of their rude fare, and resigned themselves to the sweetest sleep they had enjoyed since their outset upon the prairies.

The country now became rugged and broken. High bluffs advanced upon the river, and forced the travellers occasionally to leave its banks and wind their course into the interior. In one of the wild and solitary passes, they were startled by the trail of four or five pedestrians, whom they supposed to be spies from some predatory camp of either Arickara or Crow Indians. This obliged them to redouble their vigilance at night, and to keep especial watch upon their horses. In these rugged and elevated regions they began to see the black-tailed deer, a species larger than the ordinary kind, and chiefly found in rocky and mountainous countries. They had reached also a great buffalo range; Captain Bonneville ascended a high bluff, commanding an extensive view of the surrounding plains. As far as his eye could reach, the country seemed absolutely blackened by innumerable herds. No language, he says, could convey an adequate idea of the vast living mass thus presented to his eye. He remarked that the bulls and cows generally congregated in separate herds.

Opposite to the camp at this place was a singular phenomenon, which is among the curiosities of the country. It is called the chimney. The lower part is a conical mound, rising out of the naked plain; from the summit shoots up a shaft or column, about one hundred and twenty feet in height, from which it derives its name. The height of the whole, according to Captain Bonneville, is a hundred and seventy-five yards. It is composed of indurated clay, with alternate layers of red and white sandstone, and may be seen at the distance of upwards of thirty miles.

On the 21st, they encamped amidst high and beetling cliffs of indurated clay and sandstone, bearing the semblance of

towers, castles, churches, and fortified cities. At a distance, it was scarcely possible to persuade one's self that the works of art were not mingled with these fantastic freaks of nature. They have received the name of Scott's Bluffs, from a melancholy circumstance. A number of years since, a party were descending the upper part of the river in canoes, when their frail barks were overturned and all their powder spoiled. Their rifles being thus rendered useless, they were unable to procure food by hunting, and had to depend upon roots and wild fruits for subsistence. After suffering extremely from hunger, they arrived at Laramie's Fork, a small tributary of the north branch of the Nebraska, about sixty miles above the cliffs just mentioned. Here one of the party, by the name of Scott, was taken ill; and his companions came to a halt, until he should recover health and strength sufficient to proceed. While they were searching round in quest of edible roots, they discovered a fresh trail of white men, who had evidently but recently preceded them. What was to be done? By a forced march they might overtake this party, and thus be able to reach the settlements in safety. Should they linger they might all perish of famine and exhaustion. Scott, however, was incapable of moving; they were too feeble to aid him forward, and dreaded that such a clog would prevent their coming up with the advance party. They determined, therefore, to abandon him to his fate. Accordingly, under pretence of seeking food, and such simples as might be efficacious in his malady, they deserted him and hastened forward upon the trail. They succeeded in overtaking the party of which they were in quest, but concealed their faithless desertion of Scott; alleging that he had died of disease.

On the ensuing summer, these very individuals, visiting these parts in company with others, came suddenly upon the bleached bones and grinning skull of a human skeleton, which, by certain signs, they recognised for the remains of Scott. This was sixty long miles from the place where they had abandoned him; and it appeared that the wretched man had crawled that immense distance before death put an end to his miseries. The wild and picturesque bluffs in the neighbourhood of his lonely grave have ever since borne his name.

Amidst this wild and striking scenery, Captain Bonneville, for the first time, beheld flocks of the ahsahta or bighorn, an

animal which frequents these cliffs in great numbers. They accord with the nature of such scenery, and add much to its romantic effect; bounding like goats from crag to crag, often trooping along the lofty shelves of the mountains, under the guidance of some venerable patriarch, with horns twisted lower than his muzzle, and sometimes peering over the edge of a precipice, so high that they appear scarce bigger than crows; indeed, it seems a pleasure to them to seek the most rugged and frightful situations, doubtless from a feeling of security.

This animal is commonly called the mountain sheep, and is often confounded with another animal, the "woolly sheep," found more to the northward, about the country of the Flatheads. The latter likewise inhabits cliffs in summer, but descends into the valleys in the winter. It has white wool, like a sheep, mingled with a thin growth of long hair; but it has short legs, a deep belly, and a beard like a goat. Its horns are about five inches long, slightly curved backwards, black as jet, and beautifully polished. Its hoofs are of the same colour. This animal is by no means so active as the bighorn; it does not bound much, but sits a good deal upon its haunches. It is not so plentiful either; rarely more than two or three are seen at a time. Its wool alone gives a resemblance to the sheep; it is more properly of the goat genus. The flesh is said to have a musty flavour; some have thought the fleece might be valuable, as it is said to be as fine as that of the goat of Cashmere, but it is not to be procured in sufficient quantities.

The ahsapta, argali, or bighorn, on the contrary, has short hair like a deer, and resembles it in shape, but has the head and horns of a sheep, and its flesh is said to be delicious mutton. The Indians consider it more sweet and delicate than any other kind of venison. It abounds in the Rocky Mountains, from the fiftieth degree of north latitude, quite down to California; generally in the highest regions capable of vegetation; sometimes it ventures into the valleys, but on the least alarm, regains its favourite cliffs and precipices, where it is perilous, if not impossible, for the hunter to follow*.

* Dimensions of a male of this species, from the nose to the base of the tail, five feet; length of the tail, four inches; girth of the body, four feet; height, three feet eight inches; the horn, three feet six inches long, one foot three inches in circumference at base.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN on the march, Captain Bonneville always sent some of his best hunters in the advance to reconnoitre the country, as well as to look out for game. On the 24th of May, as the caravan was slowly journeying up the banks of the Nebraska, the hunters came galloping back, waving their caps, and giving the alarm cry, Indians! Indians!

The captain immediately ordered a halt: the hunters now came up and announced that a large war-party of Crow Indians were just above, on the river. The captain knew the character of these savages; one of the most roving, warlike, crafty, and predatory tribes of the mountains; horse-stealers of the first order, and easily provoked to acts of sanguinary violence. Orders were accordingly given to prepare for action, and every one promptly took the post that had been assigned him, in the general order of the march, in all cases of warlike emergency.

Everything being put in battle array, the captain took the lead of his little band, and moved on slowly and warily. In a little while he beheld the Crow warriors emerging from among the bluffs. There were about sixty of them; fine martial-looking fellows, painted and arrayed for war, and mounted on horses decked out with all kinds of wild trappings. They came prancing along in gallant style, with many wild and dexterous evolutions, for none can surpass them in horsemanship; and their bright colours, and flaunting and fantastic embellishments, glaring and sparkling in the morning sunshine, gave them really a striking appearance.

Their mode of approach, to one not acquainted with the tactics and ceremonies of this rude chivalry of the wilderness, had an air of direct hostility. They came galloping forward in a body, as if about to make a furious charge, but, when close at hand, opened to the right and left, and wheeled in wide circles round the travellers, whooping and yelling like maniacs.

This done, their mock fury sank into a calm, and the chief, approaching the captain, who had remained warily drawn up, though informed of the pacific nature of the manœuvre, extended to him the hand of friendship. The pipe of peace was smoked, and now all was good fellowship.

The Crows were in pursuit of a band of Cheyennes, who had attacked their village in the night, and killed one of their people. They had already been five-and-twenty days on the track of the marauders, and were determined not to return home until they had sated their revenge.

A few days previously, some of their scouts, who were ranging the country at a distance from the main body, had discovered the party of Captain Bonneville. They had dogged it for a time in secret, astonished at the long train of wagons and oxen, and especially struck with the sight of a cow and calf, quietly following the caravan, supposing them to be some kind of tame buffalo. Having satisfied their curiosity, they carried back to their chief intelligence of all that they had seen. He had, in consequence, diverged from his pursuit of vengeance to behold the wonders described to him. "Now that we have met you," said he to Captain Bonneville, "and have seen these marvels with our own eyes, our hearts are glad." In fact, nothing could exceed the curiosity evinced by these people as to the objects before them. Wagons had never been seen by them before, and they examined them with the greatest minuteness; but the calf was the peculiar object of their admiration. They watched it with intense interest as it licked the hands accustomed to feed it, and were struck with the mild expression of its countenance, and its perfect docility.

After much sage consultation, they at length determined that it must be the "great medicine" of the white party; an appellation given by the Indians to anything of supernatural and mysterious power, that is guarded as a talisman. They were completely thrown out in their conjecture, however, by an offer of the white men to exchange the calf for a horse; their estimation of the "great medicine" sank in an instant, and they declined the bargain.

At the request of the Crow chieftain the two parties encamped together, and passed the residue of the day in company. The captain was well pleased with every opportunity to gain a knowledge of the "unsophisticated sons of nature," who had so long been objects of his poetic speculations; and, indeed, this wild horse-stealing tribe is one of the most notorious of the mountains. The chief, of course, had his scalps to show and his battles to recount. The Blackfoot is the hereditary enemy of the Crow, towards whom hostility is like

a cherished principle of religion ; for every tribe, besides its casual antagonists, has some enduring foe with whom there can be no permanent reconciliation. The Crows and Black-feet, upon the whole, are enemies worthy of each other, being rogues and ruffians of the first water. As their predatory excursions extend over the same regions, they often come in contact with each other, and these casual conflicts serve to keep their wits awake and their passions alive.

The present party of Crows, however, evinced nothing of the invidious character for which they are renowned. During the day and night that they were encamped in company with the travellers, their conduct was friendly in the extreme. They were, in fact, quite irksome in their attentions, and had a caressing manner at times quite importunate. It was not until after separation on the following morning, that the captain and his men ascertained the secret of all this loving-kindness. In the course of their fraternal caresses, the Crows had contrived to empty the pockets of their white brothers ; to abstract the very buttons from their coats, and, above all, to make free with their hunting knives.

By equal altitudes of the sun, taken at this last encampment, Captain Bonneville ascertained his latitude to be $41^{\circ} 47'$ north. The thermometer, at six o'clock in the morning, stood at fifty-nine degrees ; at two o'clock, P.M., at ninety-two degrees ; and at six o'clock in the evening, at seventy degrees.

The Black Hills, or Mountains, now began to be seen at a distance, printing the horizon with their rugged and broken outlines ; and threatening to oppose a difficult barrier in the way of the travellers.

On the 26th of May, the travellers encamped at Laramie's Fork, a clear and beautiful stream, rising in the west-south-west, maintaining an average width of twenty yards, and winding through broad meadows abounding in currants and gooseberries, and adorned with groves and clumps of trees.

By an observation of Jupiter's satellites, with a Dolland reflecting telescope, Captain Bonneville ascertained the longitude to be $102^{\circ} 57'$ west of Greenwich.

We will here step ahead of our narrative to observe that, about three years after the time of which we are treating, Mr. Robert Campbell, formerly of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, descended the Platte from this fork, in skin canoes, thus

proving, what had always been discredited, that the river was navigable. About the same time, he built a fort or trading post at Laramie's Fork, which he named Fort William, after his friend and partner, Mr. William Sublette. Since that time, the Platte has become a highway for the fur traders.

For some days past, Captain Bonneville had been made sensible of the great elevation of country into which he was gradually ascending, by the effect of the dryness and rarefaction of the atmosphere upon his wagons. The wood-work shrank; the paint boxes of the wheels were continually working out, and it was necessary to support the spokes by stout props to prevent their falling asunder. The travellers were now entering one of those great steppes of the Far West, where the prevalent aridity of the atmosphere renders the country unfit for cultivation. In these regions there is a fresh sweet growth of grass in the spring, but it is scanty and short, and parches up in the course of the summer, so that there is none for the hunters to set fire to in the autumn. It is a common observation, that "above the forks of the Platte the grass does not burn." All attempts at agriculture and gardening in the neighbourhood of Fort William have been attended with very little success. The grain and vegetables raised there have been scanty in quantity and poor in quality. The great elevation of these plains, and the dryness of the atmosphere, will tend to retain these immense regions in a state of pristine wilderness.

In the course of a day or two more, the travellers entered that wild and broken tract of the Crow country called the Black Hills, and here their journey became toilsome in the extreme. Rugged steeps and deep ravines incessantly obstructed their progress, so that a great part of the day was spent in the painful toil of digging through banks, filling up ravines, forcing the wagons up the most forbidding ascents, or swinging them with ropes down the face of dangerous precipices. The shoes of their horses were worn out, and their feet injured by the rugged and stony roads. The travellers were annoyed also by frequent but brief storms, which would come hurrying over the hills, or through the mountain defiles, rage with great fury for a short time, and then pass off, leaving everything calm and serene again.

For several nights the camp had been infested by vagabond Indian dogs, prowling about in quest of food. They were

about the size of a large pointer; with ears short and erect, and a long bushy tail; altogether, they bore a striking resemblance to a wolf. These skulking visitors would keep about the purlieus of the camp until daylight; when, on the first stir of life among the sleepers, they would scamper off until they reached some rising ground, where they would take their seats, and keep a sharp and hungry watch upon every movement. The moment the travellers were fairly on the march, and the camp was abandoned, these starveling hangers-on would hasten to the deserted fires, to seize upon the half-picked bones, the offals and garbage that lay about; and, having made a hasty meal, with many a snap and snarl and growl, would follow leisurely on the trail of the caravan. Many attempts were made to coax or catch them, but in vain. Their quick and suspicious eyes caught the slightest sinister movement, and they turned and scampered off. At length one was taken. He was terribly alarmed, and crouched and trembled as if expecting instant death. Soothed, however, by caresses, he began after a time to gather confidence and wag his tail, and at length was brought to follow close at the heels of his captors, still, however, darting around furtive and suspicious glances, and evincing a disposition to scamper off upon the least alarm.

On the 1st of July the band of Crow warriors again crossed their path. They came in vaunting and vainglorious style; displaying five Cheyenne scalps, the trophies of their vengeance. They were now bound homewards, to appease the manes of their comrade by these proofs that his death had been revenged, and intended to have scalp-dances and other triumphant rejoicings. Captain Bonneville and his men, however, were by no means disposed to renew their confiding intimacy with these crafty savages, and, above all, took care to avoid their pilfering caresses. They remarked one precaution of the Crows with respect to their horses; to protect their hoofs from the sharp and jagged rocks among which they had to pass they had covered them with shoes of buffalo hide.

The route of the travellers lay generally along the course of the Nebraska or Platte, but occasionally, where steep promontories advanced to the margin of the stream, they were obliged to make inland circuits. One of these took them through a bold and stern country, bordered by a range of low mountains, running east and west. Everything around bore traces of

some fearful convulsion of nature in times long past. Hitherto the various strata of rock had exhibited a gentle elevation towards the south-west, but here everything appeared to have been subverted, and thrown out of place. In many places there were heavy beds of white sandstone resting upon red. Immense strata of rocks jutted up into crags and cliffs, and sometimes formed perpendicular walls and overhanging precipices. An air of sterility prevailed over these savage wastes. The valleys were destitute of herbage, and scantily clothed with a stunted species of wormwood, generally known among traders and trappers by the name of sage. From an elevated point of their march through this region, the travellers caught a beautiful view of the Powder River Mountains away to the north, stretching along the very verge of the horizon, and seeming, from the snow with which they were mantled, to be a chain of small white clouds, connecting sky and earth.

Though the thermometer at mid-day ranged from eighty to ninety, and even sometimes rose to ninety-three degrees, yet occasional spots of snow were to be seen on the tops of the low mountains, among which the travellers were journeying; proofs of the great elevation of the whole region.

The Nebraska, in its passage through the Black Hills, is confined to a much narrower channel than that through which it flows in the plains below; but it is deeper and clearer, and rushes with a stronger current. The scenery, also, is more varied and beautiful. Sometimes it glides rapidly but smoothly through a picturesque valley, between wooded banks; then, forcing its way into the bosom of rugged mountains, it rushes impetuously through narrow defiles, roaring and foaming down rocks and rapids, until it is again soothed to rest in some peaceful valley.

On the 12th of July, Captain Bonneville abandoned the main stream of the Nebraska, which was continually shouldered by rugged promontories, and making a bend to the south-west, for a couple of days, part of the time over plains of loose sand, encamped on the 14th on the banks of the Sweet Water, a stream about twenty yards in breadth, and four or five feet deep, flowing between low banks over a sandy soil, and forming one of the forks or upper branches of the Nebraska. Up this stream they now shaped their course for several successive days, tending generally to the west. The soil was light and sandy; the country much di-

versified. Frequently the plains were studded with isolated blocks of rock, sometimes in the shape of a half globe, and from three to four hundred feet high. These singular masses had occasionally a very imposing and even sublime appearance, rising from the midst of a savage and lonely landscape.

As the travellers continued to advance, they became more and more sensible of the elevation of the country. The hills around were more generally capped with snow. The men complained of cramps and colics, sore lips and mouths, and violent headaches. The wood-work of the wagons also shrank so much that it was with difficulty the wheels were kept from falling to pieces. The country bordering upon the river was frequently gashed with deep ravines, or traversed by high bluffs, to avoid which the travellers were obliged to make wide circuits through the plains. In the course of these they came upon immense herds of buffalo, which kept scouring off in the van like a retreating army.

Among the motley retainers of the camp was Tom Cain, a raw Irishman, who officiated as cook, whose various blunders and expedients in his novel situation, and in the wild scenes and wild kind of life into which he had suddenly been thrown, had made him a kind of butt or droll of the camp. Tom, however, began to discover an ambition superior to his station, and the conversation of the hunters, and the stories of their exploits, inspired him with a desire to elevate himself to the dignity of their order. The buffalo in such immense droves presented a tempting opportunity for making his first essay. He rode in the line of march all prepared for action: his powder-flask and shot-pouch knowingly slung at the pommel of his saddle, to be at hand; his rifle balanced on his shoulder. While in this plight a troop of buffalo came trotting by in great alarm. In an instant Tom sprang from his horse and gave chase on foot. Finding they were leaving him behind, he levelled his rifle and pulled trigger. His shot produced no other effect than to increase the speed of the buffalo and to frighten his own horse, who took to his heels and scampered off with all the ammunition. Tom scampered after him, hallooing with might and main, and the wild horse and wild Irishman soon disappeared among the ravines of the prairie. Captain Bonneville, who was at the head of the line, and had seen the transaction at a distance, detached a

party in pursuit of Tom. After a long interval they returned, leading the frightened horse; but though they had scoured the country, and looked out and shouted from every height, they had seen nothing of his rider.

As Captain Bonneville knew Tom's utter awkwardness and inexperience, and the dangers of a bewildered Irishman in the midst of a prairie, he halted and encamped at an early hour, that there might be a regular hunt for him in the morning.

At early dawn on the following day scouts were sent off in every direction, while the main body, after breakfast, proceeded slowly on its course. It was not until the middle of the afternoon that the hunters returned, with honest Tom mounted behind one of them. They had found him in a complete state of perplexity and amazement. His appearance caused shouts of merriment in the camp—but Tom for once could not join in the mirth raised at his expense; he was completely chapfallen, and apparently cured of the hunting mania for the rest of his life.

CHAPTER V.

It was on the 20th of July that Captain Bonneville first came in sight of the grand region of his hopes and anticipations, the Rocky Mountains. He had been making a bend to the south to avoid some obstacles along the river, and had attained a high rocky ridge, when a magnificent prospect burst upon his sight. To the west rose the Wind River Mountains, with their bleached and snowy summits towering into the clouds. These stretched far to the north-north-west, until they melted away into what appeared to be faint clouds, but which the experienced eyes of the veteran hunters of the party recognised for the rugged mountains of the Yellowstone; at the feet of which extended the wild Crow country: a perilous though profitable region for the trapper.

To the south-west the eye ranged over an immense extent of wilderness, with what appeared to be a snowy vapour resting upon its horizon. This, however, was pointed out as another branch of the Great Chippewyan, or Rocky chain; being the Eutaw Mountains, at whose basis the wandering tribe of hunters of the same name pitch their tents

We can imagine the enthusiasm of the worthy captain, when he beheld the vast and mountainous scene of his adventurous enterprise thus suddenly unveiled before him. We can imagine with what feelings of awe and admiration he must have contemplated the Wind River Sierra, or bed of mountains ; that great fountain-head from whose springs, and lakes, and melted snows, some of those mighty rivers take their rise, which wander over hundreds of miles of varied country and clime, and find their way to the opposite waves of the Atlantic and the Pacific.

The Wind River Mountains are, in fact, among the most remarkable of the whole Rocky chain, and would appear to be among the loftiest. They form, as it were, a great bed of mountains, about eighty miles in length, and from twenty to thirty in breadth ; with rugged peaks, covered with eternal snows, and deep narrow valleys, full of springs, and brooks, and rock-bound lakes. From this great treasury of waters issue forth limpid streams, which, augmenting as they descend, become main tributaries, of the Missouri on the one side, and the Columbia on the other ; and give rise to the Seeds-ke-dee Agie, or Green River, the great Colorado of the West, that empties its current into the Gulf of California.

The Wind River Mountains are notorious in hunters' and trappers' stories : their rugged defiles, and the rough tracts about their neighbourhood, having been lurking places for the predatory hordes of the mountains, and scenes of rough encounter with Crows and Blackfeet. It was to the west of these mountains, in the valley of the Seeds-ke-dee Agie, or Green River, that Captain Bonneville intended to make a halt, for the purpose of giving repose to his people and his horses, after their weary journeying, and of collecting information as to his future course. This Green River valley, and its immediate neighbourhood, as we have already observed, formed the main point of rendezvous, for the present year, of the rival fur companies, and the motley populace, civilized and savage, connected with them. Several days of rugged travel, however, yet remained for the captain and his men, before they should encamp in this desired resting-place.

On the 21st of July, as they were pursuing their course through one of the meadows of the Sweet Water, they beheld a horse grazing at a little distance. He showed no alarm at their approach, but suffered himself quietly to be taken, evinc-

ing a perfect state of tameness. The scouts of the party were instantly on the look-out for the owners of this animal, lest some dangerous band of savages might be lurking in the vicinity. After a narrow search, they discovered the trail of an Indian party, which had evidently passed through that neighbourhood but recently. The horse was accordingly taken possession of as an estray; but a more vigilant watch than usual was kept round the camp at nights, lest his former owners should be upon the prowl.

The travellers had now attained so high an elevation, that on the 23rd of July, at daybreak, there was considerable ice in the water-buckets, and the thermometer stood at twenty-two degrees. The rarity of the atmosphere continued to affect the wood-work of the wagons, and the wheels were incessantly falling to pieces. A remedy was at length devised. The tire of each wheel was taken off, a ban of wood was nailed round the exterior of the felloes, the tire was then made red hot, replaced round the wheel, and suddenly cooled with water. By this means the whole was bound together with great compactness.

The extreme elevation of these great steppes, which range along the feet of the Rocky Mountains, take away from the seeming height of their peaks, which yield to few in the known world in point of altitude above the level of the sea.

On the 24th, the travellers took final leave of the Sweet Water, and keeping westwardly, over a low and very rocky ridge, one of the most southern spurs of the Wind River Mountains, they encamped, after a march of seven hours and a half, on the banks of a small clear stream, running to the south, in which they caught a number of fine trout.

The sight of these fish was hailed with pleasure, as a sign that they had reached the waters which flow into the Pacific; for it is only on the western streams of the Rocky Mountains that trout are to be taken. The stream on which they had thus encamped, proved in effect, to be tributary to the Seeds-kedee Agie, or Green River, into which it flowed, at some distance to the south.

Captain Bonneville now considered himself as having fairly passed the crest of the Rocky Mountains; and felt some degree of exultation in being the first individual who had crossed north of the settled provinces of Mexico, from the waters of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific, with wagons. Mr. William

versified. Frequently the plains were studded with isolated blocks of rock, sometimes in the shape of a half globe, and from three to four hundred feet high. These singular masses had occasionally a very imposing and even sublime appearance, rising from the midst of a savage and lonely landscape.

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We can imagine the enthusiasm of the worthy captain, when he beheld the vast and mountainous scene of his adventurous enterprise thus suddenly unveiled before him. We can imagine with what feelings of awe and admiration he must have contemplated the Wind River Sierra, or bed of mountains ; that great fountain-head from whose springs, and lakes, and melted snows, some of those mighty rivers take their rise, which wander over hundreds of miles of varied country and clime, and find their way to the opposite waves of the Atlantic and the Pacific.

The Wind River Mountains are, in fact, among the most remarkable of the whole Rocky chain, and would appear to be among the loftiest. They form, as it were, a great bed of mountains, about eighty miles in length, and from twenty to thirty in breadth ; with rugged peaks, covered with eternal snows, and deep narrow valleys, full of springs, and brooks, and rock-bound lakes. From this great treasury of waters issue forth limpid streams, which, augmenting as they descend, become main tributaries, of the Missouri on the one side, and the Columbia on the other ; and give rise to the Seeds-ke-dee Agie, or Green River, the great Colorado of the West, that empties its current into the Gulf of California.

The Wind River Mountains are notorious in hunters' and trappers' stories : their rugged defiles, and the rough tracts about their neighbourhood, having been lurking places for the predatory hordes of the mountains, and scenes of rough encounter with Crows and Blackfeet. It was to the west of these mountains, in the valley of the Seeds-ke-dee Agie, or Green River, that Captain Bonneville intended to make a halt, for the purpose of giving repose to his people and his horses, after their weary journeying, and of collecting information as to his future course. This Green River valley, and its immediate neighbourhood, as we have already observed, formed the main point of rendezvous, for the present year, of the rival fur companies, and the motley populace, civilized and savage, connected with them. Several days of rugged travel, however, yet remained for the captain and his men, before they should encamp in this desired resting-place.

On the 21st of July, as they were pursuing their course through one of the meadows of the Sweet Water, they beheld a horse grazing at a little distance. He showed no alarm at their approach, but suffered himself quietly to be taken, evinc-

ing a perfect state of tameness. The scouts of the party were instantly on the look-out for the owners of this animal, lest some dangerous band of savages might be lurking in the vicinity. After a narrow search, they discovered the trail of an Indian party, which had evidently passed through that neighbourhood but recently. The horse was accordingly taken possession of as an estray; but a more vigilant watch than usual was kept round the camp at nights, lest his former owners should be upon the prowl.

The travellers had now attained so high an elevation, that on the 23rd of July, at daybreak, there was considerable ice in the water-buckets, and the thermometer stood at twenty-two degrees. The rarity of the atmosphere continued to affect the wood-work of the wagons, and the wheels were incessantly falling to pieces. A remedy was at length devised. The tire of each wheel was taken off, a ban of wood was nailed round the exterior of the felloes, the tire was then made red hot, replaced round the wheel, and suddenly cooled with water. By this means the whole was bound together with great compactness.

The extreme elevation of these great steppes, which range along the feet of the Rocky Mountains, take away from the seeming height of their peaks, which yield to few in the known world in point of altitude above the level of the sea.

On the 24th, the travellers took final leave of the Sweet Water, and keeping westwardly, over a low and very rocky ridge, one of the most southern spurs of the Wind River Mountains, they encamped, after a march of seven hours and a half, on the banks of a small clear stream, running to the south, in which they caught a number of fine trout.

The sight of these fish was hailed with pleasure, as a sign that they had reached the waters which flow into the Pacific; for it is only on the western streams of the Rocky Mountains that trout are to be taken. The stream on which they had thus encamped, proved in effect, to be tributary to the Seeds-ke-dee Agie, or Green River, into which it flowed, at some distance to the south.

Captain Bonneville now considered himself as having fairly passed the crest of the Rocky Mountains; and felt some degree of exultation in being the first individual who had crossed north of the settled provinces of Mexico, from the waters of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific, with wagons. Mr. William

Sublette, the enterprising leader of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, had, two or three years previously, reached the valley of the Wind River, which lies on the north-east of the mountains, but had proceeded with them no further.

A vast valley now spread itself before the travellers, bounded on one side by the Wind River Mountains, and to the west, by a long range of high hills. This, Captain Bonneville was assured by a veteran hunter in his company, was the great valley of the Seeds-ke-dee; and the same informant would fain have persuaded him that a small stream, three feet deep, which he came to on the 25th, was that river. The captain was convinced, however, that the stream was too insignificant to drain so wide a valley and the adjacent mountains: he encamped, therefore, at an early hour on its borders, that he might take the whole of the next day to reach the main river, which he presumed to flow between him and the distant range of western hills.

On the 26th of July, he commenced his march at an early hour, making directly across the valley, towards the hills in the west; proceeding at as brisk a rate as the jaded condition of his horses would permit. About eleven o'clock in the morning, a great cloud of dust was descried in the rear, advancing directly on the trail of the party. The alarm was given; they all came to a halt, and held a council of war. Some conjectured that the band of Indians, whose trail they had discovered in the neighbourhood of the stray horse, had been lying in wait for them, in some secret fastness of the mountains, and were about to attack them in the open plain, where they would have no shelter. Preparations were immediately made for defence, and a scouting party sent off to reconnoitre. They soon came galloping back, making signals that all was well. The cloud of dust was made by a band of fifty or sixty mounted trappers, belonging to the American Fur Company, who soon came up, leading their pack-horses. They were headed by Mr. Fontenelle, an experienced leader, or "partisan," as a chief of a party is called, in the technical language of the trappers.

Mr. Fontenelle informed Captain Bonneville that he was on his way from the company's trading post on the Yellowstone, to the yearly rendezvous, with reinforcements and supplies for their hunting and trading parties beyond the mountains; and that he expected to meet, by appointment,

with a band of free trappers in that very neighbourhood. He had fallen upon the trail of Captain Bonneville's party just after leaving the Nebraska; and, finding that they had frightened off all the game, had been obliged to push on, by forced marches, to avoid famine: both men and horses were, therefore, much travel-worn; but this was no place to halt; the plain before them, he said, was destitute of grass and water, neither of which would be met with short of the Green River, which was yet at a considerable distance. He hoped, he added, as his party were all on horseback, to reach the river, with hard travelling, by nightfall; but he doubted the possibility of Captain Bonneville's arrival there with his wagons before the day following. Having imparted this information, he pushed forward with all speed.

Captain Bonneville followed on as fast as circumstances would permit. The ground was firm and gravelly; but the horses were too much fatigued to move rapidly. After a long and harassing day's march, without pausing for a noontide meal, they were compelled, at nine o'clock at night, to encamp in an open plain, destitute of water or pasturage. On the following morning, the horses were turned loose at the peep of day; to slake their thirst, if possible, from the dew collected on the sparse grass, here and there springing up among dry sand-banks. The soil of a great part of this Green River valley is a whitish clay, into which the rain cannot penetrate, but which dries and cracks with the sun. In some places it produces a salt weed, and grass along the margins of the streams; but the wider expanses of it are desolate and barren. It was not until noon that Captain Bonneville reached the banks of the Seeds-ke-dee, or Colorado of the West; in the meantime, the sufferings of both men and horses had been excessive, and it was with almost frantic eagerness that they hurried to allay their burning thirst in the limpid current of the river.

Fontenelle and his party had not fared much better: the chief part had managed to reach the river by nightfall, but were nearly knocked up by the exertion; the horses of others sank under them, and they were obliged to pass the night upon the road.

On the following morning, July 27th, Fontenelle moved his camp across the river, while Captain Bonneville proceeded some little distance below, where there was a small but fresh

meadow, yielding abundant pasturage. Here the poor jaded horses were turned out to graze, and take their rest: the weary journey up the mountains had worn them down in flesh and spirit; but this last march across the thirsty plain had nearly finished them.

The captain had here the first taste of the boasted strategy of the fur trade. During his brief, but social encampment, in company with Fontenelle, that experienced trapper had managed to win over a number of Delaware Indians whom the captain had brought with him, by offering them four hundred dollars each, for the ensuing autumnal hunt. The captain was somewhat astonished when he saw these hunters, on whose services he had calculated securely, suddenly pack up their traps, and go over to the rival camp. That he might in some measure, however, be even with his competitor, he dispatched two scouts to look out for the band of free trappers who were to meet Fontenelle in this neighbourhood, and to endeavour to bring them to his camp.

As it would be necessary to remain some time in this neighbourhood, that both men and horses might repose, and recruit their strength; and as it was a region full of danger, Captain Bonneville proceeded to fortify his camp with breast-works of logs and pickets.

These precautions were, at that time, peculiarly necessary, from the bands of Blackfeet Indians which were roving about the neighbourhood. These savages are the most dangerous banditti of the mountains, and the inveterate foe of the trappers. They are Ishmaelites of the first order; always with weapon in hand, ready for action. The young braves of the tribe, who are destitute of property, go to war for booty; to gain horses, and acquire the means of setting up a lodge, supporting a family, and entitling themselves to a seat in the public councils. The veteran warriors fight merely for the love of the thing, and the consequence which success gives them among their people.

They are capital horsemen, and are generally well mounted on short, stout horses, similar to the prairie ponies, to be met with at St. Louis. When on a war party, however, they go on foot, to enable them to skulk through the country with greater secrecy; to keep in thickets and ravines, and use more adroit subterfuges and stratagems. Their mode of warfare is entirely by ambush, surprise, and sudden assaults in

the night time. If they succeed in causing a panic, they dash forward with headlong fury: if the enemy is on the alert, and shows no signs of fear, they become wary and deliberate in their movements.

Some of them are armed in the primitive style, with bows and arrows; the greater part have American fusees, made after the fashion of those of the Hudson's Bay Company. These they procure at the trading post of the American Fur Company, on Marias River, where they traffic their peltries for arms, ammunition, clothing, and trinkets. They are extremely fond of spirituous liquors and tobacco, for which nuisances they are ready to exchange, not merely their guns and horses, but even their wives and daughters. As they are a treacherous race, and have cherished a lurking hostility to the whites, ever since one of their tribe was killed by Mr. Lewis, the associate of General Clarke, in his exploring expedition across the Rocky Mountains, the American Fur Company is obliged constantly to keep at that post a garrison of sixty or seventy men.

Under the general name of Blackfeet are comprehended several tribes: such as the Surcies, the Peagans, the Blood Indians, and the Gros Ventres of the Prairies, who roam about the southern branches of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers, together with some other tribes further north.

The bands infesting the Wind River Mountains, and the country adjacent, at the time of which we are treating, were Gros Ventres *of the Prairies*, which are not to be confounded with Gros Ventres *of the Missouri*, who keep about the lower part of that river, and are friendly to the white men.

This hostile band keeps about the head waters of the Missouri, and numbers about nine hundred fighting men. Once in the course of two or three years they abandon their usual abodes, and make a visit to the Arapahoes of the Arkansas. Their route lies either through the Crow country, and the Black Hills, or through the lands of the Nez Percés, Flatheads, Bannacks, and Shoshonies. As they enjoy their favourite state of hostility with all these tribes, their expeditions are prone to be conducted in the most lawless and predatory style; nor do they hesitate to extend their maraudings to any party of white men they meet with; following their trails; hovering about their camps; waylaying and dogging the caravans of the free traders, and murdering the solitary

trapper. The consequences are, frequent and desperate fights between them and the "mountaineers," in the wild defiles and fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains.

The band in question was, at this time, on their way homeward from one of their customary visits to the Arapahoes ; and in the ensuing chapter, we shall treat of some bloody encounters between them and the trappers, which had taken place just before the arrival of Captain Bonneville among the mountains.

CHAPTER VI.

LEAVING Captain Bonneville and his band ensconced within their fortified camp in the Green River valley, we shall step back and accompany a party of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company in its progress, with supplies from St. Louis, to the annual rendezvous at Pierre's Hole. This party consisted of sixty men, well mounted, and conducting a line of pack-horses. They were commanded by Captain William Sublette, a partner in the company, and one of the most active, intrepid, and renowned leaders in this half military kind of service. He was accompanied by his associate in business, and tried companion in danger, Mr. Robert Campbell, one of the pioneers of the trade beyond the mountains, who had commanded trapping parties there in times of the greatest peril.

As these worthy compeers were on their route to the frontier, they fell in with another expedition, likewise on its way to the mountains. This was a party of regular "down-easters," that is to say, people of New England, who, with the all-penetrating, and all-pervading spirit of their race, were now pushing their way into a new field of enterprise, with which they were totally unacquainted. The party had been fitted out, and was maintained and commanded by Mr. Nathaniel J. Wyeth, of Boston*. This gentleman had conceived an idea, that a profitable fishery for salmon might be established on the Columbia River, and connected with the fur trade. He had, accordingly, invested capital in goods calculated, as he supposed, for the Indian trade, and had enlisted a number of eastern men in his

* In the former editions of this work we have erroneously given this enterprising individual the title of captain.

employ, who had never been in the Far West, nor knew anything of the wilderness. With these, he was bravely steering his way across the continent, undismayed by danger, difficulty, or distance, in the same way that a New England coaster and his neighbours will coolly launch forth on a voyage to the Black Sea, or a whaling cruise to the Pacific.

With all their national aptitude at expedient and resource, Wyeth and his men felt themselves completely at a loss when they reached the frontier, and found that the wilderness required experience and habitudes, of which they were totally deficient. Not one of the party, excepting the leader, had ever seen an Indian or handled a rifle; they were without guide or interpreter, and totally unacquainted with "woodcraft," and the modes of making their way among savage hordes, and subsisting themselves, during long marches over wild mountains and barren plains.

In this predicament Captain Sublette found them, in a manner becalmed, or rather run aground, at the little frontier town of Independence, in Missouri, and kindly took them in tow. The two parties travelled amicably together; the frontier men of Sublette's party gave their Yankee comrades some lessons in hunting, and some insight into the art and mystery of dealing with the Indians, and they all arrived without accident at the upper branches of the Nebraska, or Platte River.

In the course of their march, Mr. Fitzpatrick, the partner of the company who was resident at that time beyond the mountains, came down from the rendezvous at Pierre's Hole to meet them, and hurry them forward. He travelled in company with them until they reached the Sweet Water; then taking a couple of horses, one for the saddle, and the other as a pack-horse, he started off express for Pierre's Hole, to make arrangements against their arrival, that he might commence his hunting campaign before the rival company.

Fitzpatrick was a hardy and experienced mountaineer, and knew all the passes and defiles. As he was pursuing his lonely course up the Green River valley, he descried several horsemen at a distance, and came to a halt to reconnoitre. He supposed them to be some detachment from the rendezvous, or a party of friendly Indians. They perceived him, and setting up the war-whoop, dashed forward at full speed: he saw at once his mistake and his peril—they were Blackfeet. Springing upon his fleetest horse, and abandoning the other

to the enemy, he made for the mountains, and succeeded in escaping up one of the most dangerous defiles. Here he concealed himself until he thought the Indians had gone off, when he returned into the valley. He was again pursued, lost his remaining horse, and only escaped by scrambling up among the cliffs. For several days he remained lurking among rocks and precipices, and almost famished, having but one remaining charge in his rifle, which he kept for self-defence.

In the meantime, Sublette and Campbell, with their fellow-traveller, Wyeth, had pursued their march unmolested, and arrived in the Green River valley, totally unconscious that there was any lurking enemy at hand. They had encamped one night on the banks of a small stream, which came down from the Wind River Mountains, when about midnight, a band of Indians burst upon their camp, with horrible yells and whoops, and a discharge of guns and arrows. Happily no other harm was done than wounding one mule, and causing several horses to break loose from their pickets. The camp was instantly in arms; but the Indians retreated with yells of exultation, carrying off several of the horses, under covert of the night.

This was somewhat of a disagreeable foretaste of mountain life to some of Wyeth's band, accustomed only to the regular and peaceful life of New England; nor was it altogether to the taste of Captain Sublette's men, who were chiefly creoles and townsmen from St. Louis. They continued their march the next morning, keeping scouts ahead and upon their flanks, and arrived without further molestation at Pierre's Hole.

The first inquiry of Captain Sublette, on reaching the rendezvous, was for Fitzpatrick. He had not arrived, nor had any intelligence been received concerning him. Great uneasiness was now entertained, lest he should have fallen into the hands of the Blackfeet who had made the midnight attack upon the camp. It was a matter of general joy, therefore, when he made his appearance, conducted by two half-breed Iroquois hunters. He had lurked for several days among the mountains, until almost starved; at length he escaped the vigilance of his enemies in the night, and was so fortunate as to meet the two Iroquois hunters, who, being on horseback, conveyed him without further difficulty to the rendezvous. He arrived there so emaciated, that he could scarcely be recognised.

The valley called Pierre's Hole is about thirty miles in length and fifteen in width, bounded to the west and south by low and broken ridges, and overlooked to the east by three lofty mountains, called the three Teton, which domineer as landmarks over a vast extent of country.

A fine stream, fed by rivulets and mountain springs, pours through the valley towards the north, dividing it into nearly equal parts. The meadows on its borders are broad and extensive, covered with willow and cotton-wood trees, so closely interlocked and matted together, as to be nearly impassable.

In this valley was congregated the motley populace connected with the fur trade. Here the two rival companies had their encampments, with their retainers of all kinds: traders, trappers, hunters, and half-breeds, assembled from all quarters, awaiting their yearly supplies, and their orders to start off in new directions. Here, also, the savage tribes connected with the trade, the Nez Percés, or Chopunnish Indians, and Flatheads, had pitched their lodges beside the streams, and with their squaws, awaited the distribution of goods and finery. There was, moreover, a band of fifteen free trappers, commanded by a gallant leader from Arkansas, named Sinclair, who held their encampment a little apart from the rest. Such was the wild and heterogeneous assemblage, amounting to several hundred men, civilized and savage, distributed in tents and lodges in the several camps.

The arrival of Captain Sublette with supplies put the Rocky Mountain Fur Company in full activity. The wares and merchandise were quickly opened, and as quickly disposed of to trappers and Indians; the usual excitement and revelry took place, after which, all hands began to disperse to their several destinations.

On the 17th of July, a small brigade of fourteen trappers, led by Milton Sublette, brother of the captain, set out with the intention of proceeding to the southwest. They were accompanied by Sinclair and his fifteen free trappers; Wyeth, also, and his New England band of beaver hunters and salmon fishers, now dwindled down to eleven, took this opportunity to prosecute their cruise in the wilderness, accompanied with such experienced pilots. On the first day, they proceeded about eight miles to the southeast, and encamped for the night, still in the valley of Pierre's Hole. On the following morning, just as they were raising their camp, they observed

a long line of people pouring down a defile of the mountains. They at first supposed them to be Fontenelle and his party, whose arrival had been daily expected. Wyeth, however, reconnoitred them with a spy-glass, and soon perceived they were Indians. They were divided into two parties, forming, in the whole, about one hundred and fifty persons, men, women, and children. Some were on horseback, fantastically painted and arrayed, with scarlet blankets fluttering in the wind. The greater part, however, were on foot. They had perceived the trappers before they were themselves discovered, and came down yelling and whooping into the plain. On nearer approach, they were ascertained to be Blackfeet.

One of the trappers of Sublette's brigade, a half-breed, named Antoine Godin, now mounted his horse, and rode forth as if to hold a conference. He was the son of an Iroquois hunter, who had been cruelly murdered by the Blackfeet at a small stream below the mountains, which still bears his name. In company with Antoine rode forth a Flathead Indian, whose once powerful tribe had been completely broken down in their wars with the Blackfeet. Both of them, therefore, cherished the most vengeful hostility against these marauders of the mountains. The Blackfeet came to a halt. One of the chiefs advanced singly and unarmed, bearing the pipe of peace. This overture was certainly pacific; but Antoine and the Flathead were predisposed to hostility, and pretended to consider it a treacherous movement.

"Is your piece charged?" said Antoine to his red companion.

"It is."

"Then cock it, and follow me."

They met the Blackfoot chief half way, who extended his hand in friendship. Antoine grasped it.

"Fire!" cried he.

The Flathead levelled his piece, and brought the Blackfoot to the ground. Antoine snatched off his scarlet blanket, which was richly ornamented, and galloped off with it as a trophy to the camp, the bullets of the enemy whistling after him. The Indians immediately threw themselves into the edge of a swamp, among willows and cotton-wood trees, interwoven with vines. Here they began to fortify themselves; the women digging a trench, and throwing up a breastwork of logs and branches, deep hid in the bosom of the wood, while

the warriors skirmished at the edge to keep the trappers at bay.

The latter took their station in a ravine in front, whence they kept up a scattering fire. As to Wyeth, and his little band of "down-easters," they were perfectly astounded by this second specimen of life in the wilderness; the men, being especially unused to bush-fighting and the use of the rifle, were at a loss how to proceed. Wyeth, however, acted as a skilful commander. He got all his horses into camp and secured them; then, making a breastwork of his packs of goods, he charged his men to remain in garrison, and not to stir out of their fort. For himself, he mingled with the other leaders, determined to take his share in the conflict.

In the meantime, an express had been sent off to the rendezvous for reinforcements. Captain Sublette, and his associate, Campbell, were at their camp when the express came galloping across the plain, waving his cap, and giving the alarm; "Blackfeet! Blackfeet! a fight in the upper part of the valley!—to arms! to arms!"

The alarm was passed from camp to camp. It was a common cause. Every one turned out with horse and rifle. The Nez Percés and Flatheads joined. As fast as horseman could arm and mount he galloped off; the valley was soon alive with white men and red men scouring at full speed.

Sublette ordered his men to keep to the camp, being recruits from St. Louis, and unused to Indian warfare. He and his friend Campbell prepared for action. Throwing off their coats, rolling up their sleeves, and arming themselves with pistols and rifles, they mounted their horses and dashed forward among the first. As they rode along, they made their wills in soldier-like style; each stating how his effects should be disposed of in case of his death, and appointing the other his executor.

The Blackfeet warriors had supposed the brigade of Milton Sublette all the foe they had to deal with, and were astonished to behold the whole valley suddenly swarming with horsemen, galloping to the field of action. They withdrew into their fort, which was completely hid from sight in the dark and tangled wood. Most of their women and children had retreated to the mountains. The trappers now sallied forth and approached the swamp, firing into the thickets at random; the Blackfeet

to the enemy, he made for the mountains, and succeeded in escaping up one of the most dangerous defiles. Here he concealed himself until he thought the Indians had gone off, when he returned into the valley. He was again pursued, lost his remaining horse, and only escaped by scrambling up among the cliffs. For several days he remained lurking among rocks and precipices, and almost famished, having but one remaining charge in his rifle, which he kept for self-defence.

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The alarm was passed from camp to camp. It was a common cause. Every one turned out with horse and rifle. The Nez Percés and Flatheads joined. As fast as horseman could arm and mount he galloped off; the valley was soon alive with white men and red men scouring at full speed.

Sublette ordered his men to keep to the camp, being recruits from St. Louis, and unused to Indian warfare. He and his friend Campbell prepared for action. Throwing off their coats, rolling up their sleeves, and arming themselves with pistols and rifles, they mounted their horses and dashed forward among the first. As they rode along, they made their wills in soldier-like style; each stating how his effects should be disposed of in case of his death, and appointing the other his executor.

The Blackfeet warriors had supposed the brigade of Milton Sublette all the foe they had to deal with, and were astonished to behold the whole valley suddenly swarming with horsemen, galloping to the field of action. They withdrew into their fort, which was completely hid from sight in the dark and tangled wood. Most of their women and children had retreated to the mountains. The trappers now sallied forth and approached the swamp, firing into the thickets at random; the Blackfeet

had a better sight at their adversaries, who were in the open field, and a half-breed was wounded in the shoulder.

When Captain Sublette arrived, he urged to penetrate the swamp and storm the fort, but all hung back in awe of the dismal horrors of the place and the danger of attacking such desperadoes in their savage den. The very Indian allies, though accustomed to bush-fighting, regarded it as almost impenetrable, and full of frightful danger. Sublette was not to be turned from his purpose, but offered to lead the way into the swamp. Campbell stepped forward to accompany him. Before entering the perilous wood, Sublette took his brothers aside, and told them that in case he fell, Campbell, who knew his will, was to be his executor. This done, he grasped his rifle and pushed into the thickets, followed by Campbell. Sinclair, the partisan from Arkansas, was at the edge of the wood with his brother and a few of his men. Excited by the gallant example of the two friends, he pressed forward to share their dangers.

The swamp was produced by the labours of the beaver, which, by damming up a stream, had inundated a portion of the valley. The place was all overgrown with woods and thickets, so closely matted and entangled that it was impossible to see ten paces ahead, and the three associates in peril had to crawl along, one after another, making their way by putting the branches and vines aside; but doing it with caution, lest they should attract the eye of some lurking marksman. They took the lead by turns, each advancing about twenty yards at a time, and now and then hallooing to their men to follow. Some of the latter gradually entered the swamp, and followed a little distance in their rear.

They had now reached a more open part of the wood, and had glimpses of the rude fortress from between the trees. It was a mere breastwork, as we have said, of logs and branches, with blankets, buffalo robes, and the leathern covers of lodges, extended round the top as a screen. The movements of the leaders, as they groped their way, had been descried by the sharp-sighted enemy. As Sinclair, who was in the advance, was putting some branches aside, he was shot through the body. He fell on the spot. "Take me to my brother," said he to Campbell. The latter gave him in charge to some of the men, who conveyed him out of the swamp.

Sublette now took the advance. As he was reconnoitring

the fort, he perceived an Indian peeping through an aperture. In an instant his rifle was levelled and discharged, and the ball struck the savage in the eye. While he was reloading, he called to Campbell, and pointed out to him the hole; "Watch that place," said he, "and you will soon have a fair chance for a shot." Scarce had he uttered these words, when a ball struck him in the shoulder, and almost wheeled him round. His first thought was to take hold of his arm with his other hand, and move it up and down. He ascertained, to his satisfaction, that the bone was not broken. The next moment he was so faint, that he could not stand. Campbell took him in his arms and carried him out of the thicket. The same shot that struck Sublette, wounded another man in the head.

A brisk fire was now opened by the mountaineers from the wood, answered occasionally from the fort. Unluckily, the trappers and their allies, in searching for the fort, had got scattered, so that Wyeth, and a number of Nez Percés, approached the fort on the northwest side, while others did the same on the opposite quarter. A cross-fire thus took place, which occasionally did mischief to friends as well as foes. An Indian was shot down, close to Wyeth, by a ball which, he was convinced, had been sped from the rifle of a trapper on the other side of the fort.

The number of whites and their Indian allies had by this time so much increased by arrivals from the rendezvous, that the Blackfeet were completely overmatched. They kept doggedly in their fort, however, making no offer of surrender. An occasional firing into the breastwork was kept up during the day. Now and then, one of the Indian allies, in bravado, would rush up to the fort, fire over the ramparts, tear off a buffalo robe or a scarlet blanket, and return with it in triumph to his comrades. Most of the savage garrison that fell, however, were killed in the first part of the attack.

At one time it was resolved to set fire to the fort; and the squaws belonging to the allies were employed to collect combustibles. This, however, was abandoned; the Nez Percés being unwilling to destroy the robes and blankets, and other spoils of the enemy, which they felt sure would fall into their hands.

The Indians, when fighting, are prone to taunt and revile each other. During one of the pauses of the battle, the voice of the Blackfeet chief was heard.

“ So long,” said he, “ as we had powder and ball, we fought you in the open field : when those were spent, we retreated here to die with our women and children. You may burn us in our fort ; but, stay by our ashes, and you who are so hungry for fighting, will soon have enough. There are four hundred lodges of our brethren at hand. They will soon be here—their arms are strong—their hearts are big—they will avenge us !”

This speech was translated two or three times by Nez Percé and creole interpreters. By the time it was rendered into English, the chief was made to say, that four hundred lodges of his tribe were attacking the encampment at the other end of the valley. Every one now was for hurrying to the defence of the rendezvous. A party was left to keep watch upon the fort ; the rest galloped off to the camp. As night came on, the trappers drew out of the swamp, and remained about the skirts of the wood. By morning, their companions returned from the rendezvous, with the report that all was safe. As the day opened, they ventured within the swamp and approached the fort. All was silent. They advanced up to it without opposition. They entered : it had been abandoned in the night, and the Blackfeet had effected their retreat, carrying off their wounded on litters made of branches, leaving bloody traces on the herbage. The bodies of ten Indians were found within the fort ; among them, the one shot in the eye by Sublette. The Blackfeet afterwards reported that they had lost twenty-six warriors in this battle. Thirty-two horses were likewise found killed ; among them were some of those recently carried off from Sublette's party, in the night ; which showed that these were the very savages that had attacked him. They proved to be an advance part of the main body of Blackfeet, which had been upon the trail of Sublette's party. Five white men and one half-breed were killed, and several wounded. Seven of the Nez Percés were also killed, and six wounded. They had an old chief, who was reputed as invulnerable. In the course of the action he was hit by a spent ball, and threw up blood ; but his skin was unbroken. His people were now fully convinced that he was proof against powder and ball.

A striking circumstance is related as having occurred the morning after the battle. As some of the trappers and their Indian allies were approaching the fort, through the woods, they beheld an Indian woman, of noble form and features, leaning against a tree. Their surprise at her lingering here

alone, to fall into the hands of her enemies, was dispelled, when they saw the corpse of a warrior at her feet. Either she was so lost in grief, as not to perceive their approach; or a proud spirit kept her silent and motionless. The Indians set up a yell, on discovering her, and before the trappers could interfere, her mangled body fell upon the corpse which she had refused to abandon. We have heard this anecdote discredited by one of the leaders who had been in the battle: but the fact may have taken place without his seeing it, and been concealed from him. It is an instance of female devotion, even to the death, which we are well disposed to believe and to record.

After the battle, the brigade of Milton Sublette, together with the free trappers, and Wyeth's New England band, remained some days at the rendezvous, to see if the main body of Blackfeet intended to make an attack; nothing of the kind occurring, they once more put themselves in motion, and proceeded on their route towards the southwest.

Captain Sublette having distributed his supplies, had intended to set off on his return to St. Louis, taking with him the peltries collected from the trappers and Indians. His wound, however, obliged him to postpone his departure. Several who were to have accompanied him became impatient of this delay. Among these was a young Bostonian, Mr. Joseph More, one of the followers of Mr. Wyeth, who had seen enough of mountain life and savage warfare, and was eager to return to the abodes of civilization. He and six others, among whom were a Mr. Foy, of Mississippi, Mr. Alfred K. Stephens, of St. Louis, and two grandsons of the celebrated Daniel Boon, set out together, in advance of Sublette's party, thinking they would make their own way through the mountains.

It was just five days after the battle of the swamp that these seven companions were making their way through Jackson's Hole, a valley not far from the three Tetons, when, as they were descending a hill, a party of Blackfeet that lay in ambush, started up with terrific yells. The horse of the young Bostonian, who was in front, wheeled round with affright, and threw his unskilful rider. The young man scrambled up the side of the hill, but, unaccustomed to such wild scenes, lost his presence of mind, and stood, as if paralyzed, on the edge of a bank, until the Blackfeet came up and slew him on the

spot. His comrades had fled on the first alarm ; but two of them, Foy and Stephens, seeing his danger, paused when they got half way up the hill, turned back, dismounted, and hastened to his assistance. Foy was instantly killed. Stephens was severely wounded, but escaped, to die five days afterwards. The survivors returned to the camp of Captain Sublette, bringing tidings of this new disaster. That hardy leader, as soon as he could bear the journey, set out on his return to St. Louis, accompanied by Campbell. As they had a number of pack-horses richly laden with peltries to convoy, they chose a different route through the mountains, out of the way, as they hoped, of the lurking bands of Blackfeet. They succeeded in making the frontier in safety. We remember to have seen them with their band, about two or three months afterwards, passing through a skirt of woodland in the upper part of Missouri. Their long cavalcade stretched in single file for nearly half a mile. Sublette still wore his arm in a sling. The mountaineers in their rude hunting dresses, armed with rifles, and roughly mounted, and leading their pack-horses down a hill of the forest, looked like banditti returning with plunder. On the top of some of the packs were perched several half-breed children, perfect little imps, with wild black eyes glaring from among elf locks. These, I was told, were children of the trappers : pledges of love from their squaw spouses in the wilderness.

CHAPTER VII.

THE Blackfeet warriors, when they effected their midnight retreat from their wild fastness in Pierre's Hole, fell back into the valley of the Seeds-ke-dee, or Green River, where they joined the main body of their band. The whole force amounted to several hundred fighting men, gloomy and exasperated by their late disaster. They had with them their wives and children, which incapacitated them for any bold and extensive enterprise of a warlike nature ; but when, in the course of their wanderings, they came in sight of the encampment of Fontenelle, who had moved some distance up Green River valley in search of the free trappers, they put up tremendous war-cries, and advanced fiercely as if to attack it. Second thoughts caused them to moderate their fury.

They recollected the severe lesson just received, and could not but remark the strength of Fontenelle's position; which had been chosen with great judgment.

A formal talk ensued. The Blackfeet said nothing of the late battle, of which Fontenelle had as yet received no accounts; the latter, however, knew the hostile and perfidious nature of these savages, and took care to inform them of the encampment of Captain Bonneville, that they might know there were more white men in the neighbourhood.

The conference ended, Fontenelle sent a Delaware Indian of his party to conduct fifteen of the Blackfeet to the camp of Captain Bonneville. There was at that time two Crow Indians in the captain's camp, who had recently arrived there. They looked with dismay at this deputation from their implacable enemies, and gave the captain a terrible character of them, assuring him that the best thing they could possibly do, was to put those Blackfeet deputies to death on the spot. The captain, however, who had heard nothing of the conflict at Pierre's Hole, declined all compliance with this sage counsel. He treated the grim warriors with his usual urbanity. They passed some little time at the camp; saw, no doubt, that everything was conducted with military skill and vigilance; and that such an enemy was not to be easily surprised, nor to be molested with impunity, and then departed, to report all that they had seen to their comrades.

The two scouts which Captain Bonneville had sent out to seek for the band of free trappers, expected by Fontenelle, and to invite them to his camp, had been successful in their search, and on the 12th of August those worthies made their appearance.

To explain the meaning of the appellation, free trapper, it is necessary to state the terms on which the men enlist in the service of the fur companies. Some have regular wages, and are furnished with weapons, horses, traps, and other requisites. These are under command, and bound to do every duty required of them connected with the service; such as hunting, trapping, loading and unloading the horses, mounting guard; and, in short, all the drudgery of the camp. These are the hired trappers.

The free trappers are a more independent class; and in describing them, we shall do little more than transcribe the graphic description of them by Captain Bonneville. "They

come and go," says he, "when and where they please; provide their own horses, arms, and other equipments; trap and trade on their own account, and dispose of their skins and peltries to the highest bidder. Sometimes, in a dangerous hunting ground, they attach themselves to the camp of some trader for protection. Here they come under some restrictions; they have to conform to the ordinary rules for trapping, and to submit to such restraints, and to take part in such general duties, as are established for the good order and safety of the camp. In return for this protection, and for their camp keeping, they are bound to dispose of all the beaver they take, to the trader who commands the camp, at a certain rate per skin; or, should they prefer seeking a market elsewhere, they are to make him an allowance, of from thirty to forty dollars for the whole hunt."

There is an inferior order, who, either from prudence or poverty, come to these dangerous hunting grounds without horses or accoutrements, and are furnished by the traders. These, like the hired trappers, are bound to exert themselves to the utmost in taking beaver, which, without skinning, they render in at the trader's lodge, where a stipulated price for each is placed to their credit. These, though generally included in the generic name of free trappers, have the more specific title of skin trappers.

The wandering whites who mingle for any length of time with the savages have invariably a proneness to adopt savage habits; but none more so than the free trappers. It is a matter of vanity and ambition with them to discard everything that may bear the stamp of civilized life, and to adopt the manners, habits, dress, gesture, and even walk of the Indian. You cannot pay a free trapper a greater compliment, than to persuade him you have mistaken him for an Indian brave; and, in truth, the counterfeit is complete. His hair, suffered to attain to a great length, is carefully combed out, and either left to fall carelessly over his shoulders, or plaited neatly and tied up in otter skins, or parti-coloured ribands. A hunting-shirt of ruffled calico of bright dyes, or of ornamented leather, falls to his knee; below which, curiously fashioned leggins, ornamented with strings, fringes, and a profusion of hawks' bells, reach to a costly pair of moccasins of the finest Indian fabric, richly embroidered with beads. A blanket of scarlet, or some other bright colour, hangs from his shoulders, and is girt

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Such is the account given by Captain Bonneville of these rangers of the wilderness, and their appearance at the camp was strikingly characteristic. They came dashing forward at full speed, firing their fusees, and yelling in Indian style. Their dark sunburnt faces, and long flowing hair, their leggins, flaps, moccasins, and richly-dyed blankets, and their painted horses gaudily caparisoned, gave them so much the air and appearance of Indians, that it was difficult to persuade one's self that they were white men, and had been brought up in civilized life.

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In the evening the free trappers drew off, and returned to the camp of Fontenelle, highly delighted with their visit and with their new acquaintances, and promising to return the following day. They kept their word: day after day their visits were repeated; they became "hail fellow well met" with Captain Bonneville's men; treat after treat succeeded, until both parties got most potently convinced, or rather confounded, by liquor. Now came on confusion and uproar. The free trappers were no longer suffered to have all the swagger to themselves. The camp bullies and prime trappers of the party began to ruffle up, and to brag in turn, of their perils and achievements. Each now tried to out-boast and out-talk the other; a quarrel ensued as a matter of course, and a general fight, according to frontier usage. The two factions drew out their forces for a pitched battle. They fell to work and belaboured each other with might and main; kicks and cuffs and dry blows were as well bestowed as they were well merited, until, having fought to their hearts' content, and been drubbed into a familiar acquaintanceship with each other's prowess and good qualities, they ended the fight by becoming firmer friends than they could have been rendered by a year's peaceable companionship.

While Captain Bonneville amused himself by observing the habits and characteristics of this singular class of men; and indulged them, for the time, in all their vagaries, he profited by the opportunity to collect from them information concerning the different parts of the country about which they had been accustomed to range; the characters of the tribes, and, in short, everything important to his enterprise. He also succeeded in securing the services of several to guide him in his peregrinations among the mountains, and to trap for him during the ensuing season. Having strengthened his party with such valuable recruits, he felt in some measure consoled for the loss of the Delaware Indians, decoyed from him by Mr. Fontenelle.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE information derived from the free trappers determined Captain Bonneville as to his further movements. He learnt that in the Green River valley the winters were severe, the snow frequently falling to the depth of several feet; and that

there was no good wintering ground in the neighborhood. The upper part of Salmon River was represented as far more eligible, besides being in an excellent beaver country; and thither the captain resolved to bend his course.

The Salmon River is one of the upper branches of the Oregon or Columbia, and takes its rise from various sources, among a group of mountains to the northwest of the Wind River chain. It owes its name to the immense shoals of salmon which ascend it in the months of September and October. The salmon on the west side of the Rocky Mountains are, like the buffalo on the eastern plains, vast migratory supplies for the wants of man, that come and go with the seasons. As the buffalo in countless throngs find their certain way in the transient pasturage on the prairies, along the fresh banks of the rivers, and up every valley and green defile of the mountains, so the salmon, at their allotted seasons, regulated by a sublime and all-seeing Providence, swarm in myriads up the great rivers, and find their way up their main branches, and into the minutest tributary streams, so as to pervade the great arid plains, and to penetrate even among barren mountains. Thus wandering tribes are fed in the desert places of the wilderness, where there is no herbage for the animals of the chase, and where, but for these periodical supplies, it would be impossible for man to subsist.

The rapid currents of the rivers which run into the Pacific render the ascent of them very exhausting to the salmon. When the fish first run up the rivers, they are fat and in fine order. The struggle against impetuous streams and frequent rapids gradually renders them thin and weak, and great numbers are seen floating down the rivers on their backs. As the season advances and the water becomes chilled, they are flung in myriads on the shores, where the wolves and bears assemble to banquet on them. Often they rot in such quantities along the river banks, as to taint the atmosphere. They are commonly from two to three feet long.

Captain Bonneville now made his arrangements for the autumn and the winter. The nature of the country through which he was about to travel rendered it impossible to proceed with wagons. He had more goods and supplies of various kinds, also, than were required for present purposes, or than could be conveniently transported on horseback; aided therefore, by a few confidential men, he made *caches*, or secret

pits, during the night, when all the rest of the camp were asleep, and in these deposited the superfluous effects, together with the wagons. All traces of the caches were then carefully obliterated. This is a common expedient with the traders and trappers of the mountains. Having no established posts and magazines, they make these caches or deposits at certain points, whither they repair, occasionally, for supplies. It is an expedient derived from the wandering tribes of Indians.

Many of the horses were still so weak and lame, as to be unfit for a long scramble through the mountains. These were collected into one cavalcade, and given in charge to an experienced trapper, of the name of Matthieu. He was to proceed westward, with a brigade of trappers, to Bear River, a stream to the west of the Green River or Colorado, where there was a good pasturage for the horses. In this neighbourhood it was expected he would meet the Shoshonie villages or bands*, on their yearly migrations, with whom he was to trade for peltries and provisions. After he had traded with these people, finished his trapping, and recruited the strength of the horses, he was to proceed to Salmon River and rejoin Captain Bonneville, who intended to fix his quarters there for the winter.

While these arrangements were in progress in the camp of Captain Bonneville, there was a sudden bustle and stir in the camp of Fontenelle. One of the partners of the American Fur Company had arrived, in all haste, from the rendezvous at Pierre's Hole, in quest of the supplies. The competition between the two rival companies was now just at its height, and prosecuted with unusual zeal. The tramontane concerns of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company were managed by two resident partners, Fitzpatrick and Bridger; those of the American Fur Company, by Vanderburgh and Dripps. The latter were ignorant of the mountain regions, but trusted to make up by vigilance and activity for their want of knowledge of the country.

Fitzpatrick, an experienced trader and trapper, knew the

* A *village* of Indians, in trappers' language, does not always imply a fixed community; but often a wandering horde or band. The Shoshonies, like most of the mountain tribes, have no settled residences, but are a nomadic people, dwelling in tents or lodges, and shifting their encampments from place to place, according as fish and game abound.

evils of competition in the same hunting grounds, and had proposed that the two companies should divide the country, so as to hunt in different directions: this proposition being rejected, he had exerted himself to get first into the field. His exertions, as has already been shown, were effectual. The early arrival of Sublette, with supplies, had enabled the various brigades of the Rocky Mountain Company to start off to their respective hunting grounds. Fitzpatrick himself, with his associate, Bridger, had pushed off with a strong party of trappers, for a prime beaver country to the north-northwest.

This had put Vanderburgh upon his mettle. He had hastened on to meet Fontenelle. Finding him at his camp in Green River valley, he immediately furnished himself with the supplies; put himself at the head of the free trappers and Delawares, and set off with all speed, determined to follow hard upon the heels of Fitzpatrick and Bridger. Of the adventures of these parties among the mountains, and the disastrous effects of their competition, we shall have occasion to treat in a future chapter.

Fontenelle having now delivered his supplies and accomplished his errand, struck his tents and set off on his return to the Yellowstone. Captain Bonneville and his band, therefore, remained alone in the Green River valley; and their situation might have been perilous had the Blackfeet band still lingered in the vicinity. Those marauders, however, had been dismayed at finding so many resolute and well-appointed parties of white men in this neighbourhood. They had, therefore, abandoned this part of the country, passing over the head waters of the Green River, and bending their course towards the Yellowstone. Misfortune pursued them. Their route lay through the country of their deadly enemies, the Crows. In the Wind River valley, which lies east of the mountains, they were encountered by a powerful war party of that tribe, and completely put to rout. Forty of them were killed, many of their women and children captured, and the scattered fugitives hunted like wild beasts, until they were completely chased out of the Crow country.

On the 22nd of August Captain Bonneville broke up his camp, and set out on his route for Salmon River. His baggage was arranged in packs, three to a mule or pack-horse; one being disposed on each side of the animal and one on

the top; the three forming a load of from one hundred and eighty to two hundred and twenty pounds. This is the trappers' style of loading their pack-horses; his men, however, were inexpert at adjusting the packs, which were prone to get loose and slip off, so that it was necessary to keep a rear-guard to assist in reloading. A few days' experience, however, brought them into proper training.

Their march lay up the valley of the Seeds-ke-dee, overlooked to the right by the lofty peaks of the Wind River Mountains. From bright little lakes and fountain-heads of this remarkable bed of mountains poured forth the tributary streams of the Seeds-ke-dee. Some came rushing down gullies and ravines; others tumbling in crystal cascades from inaccessible clefts and rocks, and others winding their way in rapid and pellucid currents across the valley to throw themselves into the main river. So transparent were these waters, that the trout with which they abounded could be seen gliding about as if in the air, and their pebbly beds were distinctly visible at the depth of many feet. This beautiful and diaphonous quality of the Rocky Mountain streams prevails for a long time after they have mingled their waters and swollen into important rivers.

Issuing from the upper part of the valley, Captain Bonneville continued to the east-northeast, across rough and lofty ridges and deep rocky defiles, extremely fatiguing both to man and horse. Among his hunters was a Delaware Indian who had remained faithful to him. His name was Buckeye. He had often prided himself on his skill and success in coping with the grizzly bear, that terror of the hunters. Though crippled in the left arm, he declared he had no hesitation to close with a wounded bear, and attack him with a sword. If armed with a rifle, he was willing to brave the animal when in full force and fury. He had twice an opportunity of proving his prowess in the course of this mountain journey, and was each time successful. His mode was to seat himself upon the ground, with his rifle cocked and resting on his lame arm. Thus prepared, he would await the approach of the bear with perfect coolness, nor pull trigger until he was close at hand. In each instance he laid the monster dead upon the spot.

A march of three or four days through savage and lonely scenes brought Captain Bonneville to the fatal defile of Jack-

son's Hole, where poor More and Foy had been surprised and murdered by the Blackfeet. The feelings of the captain were shocked at beholding the bones of these unfortunate young men bleaching among the rocks, and he caused them to be decently interred.

On the 3rd of September he arrived on the summit of a mountain which commanded a full view of the eventful valley of Pierre's Hole; whence he could trace the winding of its streams through green meadows and forests of willow and cotton-wood, and have a prospect, between distant mountains, of the lava plains of Snake River, dimly spread forth like a sleeping ocean below.

After enjoying this magnificent prospect he descended into the valley, and visited the scenes of the late desperate conflict. There were the remains of the rude fortress in the swamp, shattered by rifle shot, and strewn with the mingled bones of savages and horses. There was the late populous and noisy rendezvous, with the traces of trappers' camps and Indian lodges; but their fires were extinguished, the motley assemblage of trappers and hunters, white traders and Indian braves, had all dispersed to different points of the wilderness, and the valley had relapsed into its pristine solitude and silence.

That night the captain encamped upon the battle ground; the next day he resumed his toilsome peregrinations through the mountains. For upwards of two weeks he continued his painful march; both men and horses suffering excessively at times from hunger and thirst. At length, on the 19th of September, he reached the upper waters of Salmon River.

The weather was cold, and there were symptoms of an impending storm. The night set in, but Buckeye, the Delaware Indian, was missing. He had left the party early in the morning, to hunt by himself, according to his custom. Fears were entertained lest he should lose his way, and become bewildered in tempestuous weather. These fears increased on the following morning, when a violent snow-storm came on, which soon covered the earth to the depth of several inches. Captain Bonneville immediately encamped, and sent out scouts in every direction. After some search Buckeye was discovered, quietly seated at a considerable distance in the rear, waiting the expected approach of the party, not knowing that they had passed, the snow having covered their trail.

On the ensuing morning they resumed their march at an early hour, but had not proceeded far, when the hunters, who were beating up the country in the advance, came galloping back, making signals to encamp, and crying Indians! Indians!

Captain Bonneville immediately struck into a skirt of wood, and prepared for action. The savages were now seen trooping over the hills in great numbers. One of them left the main body and came forward singly, making signals of peace. He announced them as a band of Nez Percés* or Pierced-nose Indians, friendly to the whites, whereupon an invitation was returned by Captain Bonneville, for them to come and encamp with him. They halted for a short time to make their toilette, an operation as important with an Indian warrior as with a fashionable beauty. This done, they arranged themselves in martial style, the chiefs leading the van, the braves following in a long line, painted and decorated, and topped off with fluttering plumes. In this way they advanced, shouting and singing, firing off their fusees, and clashing their shields. The two parties encamped hard by each other. The Nez Percés were on a hunting expedition, but had been almost famished on their march. They had no provisions left but a few dried salmon, yet, finding the white men equally in want they generously offered to share even this meagre pittance, and frequently repeated the offer, with an earnestness that left no doubt of their sincerity. Their generosity won the heart of Captain Bonneville, and produced the most cordial good-will on the part of his men. For two days that the parties remained in company the most amicable intercourse prevailed, and they parted the best of friends. Captain Bonneville detached a few men, under Mr. Cerré, an able leader, to accompany the Nez Percés on their hunting expedition, and to trade with them for meat for the winter's supply. After this, he proceeded down the river, about five miles below the forks, when he came to a halt on the 26th of September, to establish his winter quarters.

* We should observe that this tribe is universally called by its French name, which is pronounced by the trappers, *Nepercy*. There are two main branches of this tribe, the upper Nepercys and the lower Nepercys, as we shall show hereafter.

CHAPTER IX.

It was gratifying to Captain Bonneville, after so long and toilsome a course of travel, to relieve his poor jaded horses of the burdens under which they were almost ready to give out, and to behold them rolling upon the grass, and taking a long repose after all their sufferings. Indeed, so exhausted were they, that those employed under the saddle were no longer capable of hunting for the daily subsistence of the camp.

All hands now set to work to prepare a winter cantonment. A temporary fortification was thrown up for the protection of the party; a secure and comfortable pen, into which the horses could be driven at night; and huts were built for the reception of the merchandise.

This done, Captain Bonneville made a distribution of his forces: twenty men were to remain with him in garrison to protect the property; the rest were organized into three brigades, and sent off in different directions, to subsist themselves by hunting the buffalo, until the snow should become too deep.

Indeed, it would have been impossible to provide for the whole party in this neighbourhood. It was at the extreme western limit of the buffalo range, and these animals had recently been completely hunted out of the neighbourhood by the Nez Percés, so that, although the hunters of the garrison were continually on the alert, ranging the country round, they brought in scarce game sufficient to keep famine from the door. Now and then there was a scanty meal of fish or wild fowl, occasionally an antelope; but frequently the cravings of hunger had to be appeased with roots, or the flesh of wolves and musk-rats. Rarely could the inmates of the cantonment boast of having made a full meal, and never of having where-withal for the morrow. In this way they starved along until the 8th of October, when they were joined by a party of five families of Nez Percés, who in some measure reconciled them to the hardships of their situation, by exhibiting a lot still more destitute. A more forlorn set they had never encountered: they had not a morsel of meat or fish; nor anything to subsist on, excepting roots, wild rose-buds, the barks of certain plants, and other vegetable productions; neither had they any weapon for hunting or defence, excepting an old

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spear: yet the poor fellows made no murmur nor complaint; but seemed accustomed to their hard fare. If they could not teach the white men their practical stoicism, they at least made them acquainted with the edible properties of roots and wild rose-buds, and furnished them a supply from their own store. The necessities of the camp at length became so urgent, that Captain Bonneville determined to dispatch a party to the Horse Prairie, a plain to the north of his cantonment, to procure a supply of provisions. When the men were about to depart, he proposed to the Nez Percés that they, or some of them, should join the hunting party. To his surprise, they promptly declined. He inquired the reason for their refusal, seeing that they were in nearly as starving a situation as his own people. They replied that it was a sacred day with them, and the Great Spirit would be angry should they devote it to hunting. They offered, however, to accompany the party if it would delay its departure until the following day; but this the pinching demands of hunger would not permit, and the detachment proceeded.

A few days afterwards, four of them signified to Captain Bonneville that they were about to hunt. "What!" exclaimed he, "without guns or arrows; and with only one old spear? What do you expect to kill?" They smiled among themselves, but made no answer. Preparatory to the chase, they performed some religious rites, and offered up to the Great Spirit a few short prayers for safety and success; then, having received the blessings of their wives, they leaped upon their horses and departed, leaving the whole party of Christian spectators amazed and rebuked by this lesson of faith and dependence on a supreme and benevolent Being. "Accustomed," adds Captain Bonneville, "as I had heretofore been, to find the wretched Indian revelling in blood, and stained by every vice which can degrade human nature, I could scarcely realize the scene which I had witnessed. Wonder at such unaffected tenderness and piety, where it was least to have been sought, contended in all our bosoms with shame and confusion, at receiving such pure and wholesome instructions from creatures so far below us in all the arts and comforts of life." The simple prayers of the poor Indians were not unheard. In the course of four or five days they returned, laden with meat. Captain Bonneville was curious to know how they had attained such success with such scanty means. They

gave him to understand that they had chased the herds of buffalo at full speed, until they tired them down, when they easily dispatched them with the spear, and made use of the same weapon to flay the carcasses. To carry through their lesson to their Christian friends, the poor savages were as charitable as they had been pious, and generously shared with them the spoils of their hunting; giving them food enough to last for several days.

A further and more intimate intercourse with this tribe, gave Captain Bonneville still greater cause to admire their strong devotional feeling. "Simply to call these people religious," says he, "would convey but a faint idea of the deep hue of piety and devotion which pervades their whole conduct. Their honesty is immaculate, and their purity of purpose, and their observance of the rites of their religion, are most uniform and remarkable. They are, certainly, more like a nation of saints than a horde of savages."

In fact, the antibelligerent policy of this tribe may have sprung from the doctrines of Christian charity, for it would appear that they had imbibed some notions of the Christian faith from Catholic missionaries and traders who had been among them. They even had a rude calendar of the fasts and festivals of the Romish Church, and some traces of its ceremonies. These have become blended with their own wild rites, and present a strange medley; civilized and barbarous. On the Sabbath, men, women, and children array themselves in their best style, and assemble round a pole erected at the head of the camp. Here they go through a wild fantastic ceremonial, strongly resembling the religious dance of the Shaking Quakers; but from its enthusiasm, much more striking and impressive. During the intervals of the ceremony, the principal chiefs, who officiate as priests, instruct them in their duties, and exhort them to virtue and good deeds.

"There is something antique and patriarchal," observes Captain Bonneville, "in this union of the offices of leader and priest; as there is in many of their customs and manners, which are all strongly imbued with religion."

The worthy captain, indeed, appears to have been strongly interested by this gleam of unlooked for light amidst the darkness of the wilderness. He exerted himself, during his sojourn among this simple and well-disposed people, to inculcate, as far as he was able, the gentle and humanizing pre-

cepts of the Christian faith, and to make them acquainted with the leading points of its history ; and it speaks highly for the purity and benignity of his heart, that he derived unmixed happiness from the task.

“ Many a time,” says he, “ was my little lodge thronged, or rather piled with hearers ; for they lay on the ground, one leaning over the other, until there was no further room, all listening with greedy ears to the wonders which the Great Spirit had revealed to the white man. No other subject gave them half the satisfaction, or commanded half the attention ; and but few scenes in my life remain so freshly on my memory, or are so pleasurably recalled to my contemplation, as these hours of intercourse with a distant and benighted race in the midst of the desert.”

The only excesses indulged in by this temperate and exemplary people appear to be gambling and horseracing. In these they engage with an eagerness that amounts to infatuation. Knots of gamblers will assemble before one of their lodge fires, early in the evening, and remain absorbed in the chances and changes of the game until long after dawn of the following day. As the night advances, they wax warmer and warmer. Bets increase in amount, one loss only serves to lead to a greater, until, in the course of a single night's gambling, the richest chief may become the poorest varlet in the camp.

CHAPTER X.

On the 12th of October, two young Indians of the Nez Percé tribe arrived at Captain Bonneville's encampment. They were on their way homeward, but had been obliged to swerve from their ordinary route through the mountains, by deep snows. Their new route took them through the Horse Prairie. In traversing it they had been attracted by the distant smoke of a camp fire, and, on stealing near to reconnoitre, had discovered a war party of Blackfeet. They had several horses with them ; and, as they generally go on foot on warlike excursions, it was concluded that these horses had been captured in the course of their maraudings.

This intelligence awakened solicitude on the mind of Captain Bonneville for the party of hunters whom he had sent to

that neighbourhood; and the Nez Percés, when informed of the circumstance, shook their heads, and declared their belief that the horses they had seen had been stolen from that very party.

Anxious for information on the subject, Captain Bonneville dispatched two hunters to beat up the country in that direction. They searched in vain; not a trace of the men could be found; but they got into a region destitute of game, where they were well-nigh famished. At one time they were three entire days without a mouthful of food; at length they beheld a buffalo grazing at the foot of a mountain. After manœuvring so as to get within shot, they fired, but merely wounded him. He took to flight, and they followed him over hill and dale, with the eagerness and perseverance of starving men. A more lucky shot brought him to the ground. Stanfield sprang upon him, plunged his knife into his throat, and allayed his raging hunger by drinking his blood. A fire was instantly kindled beside the carcass, when the two hunters cooked and ate again and again, until, perfectly gorged, they sank to sleep before their hunting fire. On the following morning they rose early, made another hearty meal, then loading themselves with buffalo meat, set out on their return to the camp, to report the fruitlessness of their mission.

At length, after six weeks' absence, the hunters made their appearance, and were received with joy, proportioned to the anxiety that had been felt on their account. They had hunted with success on the prairie, but, while busy drying buffalo meat, were joined by a few panic-stricken Flatheads, who informed them that a powerful band of Blackfeet were at hand. The hunters immediately abandoned the dangerous hunting ground, and accompanied the Flatheads to their village. Here they found Mr. Cerré, and the detachment of hunters sent with him to accompany the hunting party of the Nez Percés.

After remaining some time at the village, until they supposed the Blackfeet to have left the neighbourhood, they set off with some of Mr. Cerré's men, for the cantonment at Salmon River, where they arrived without accident. They informed Captain Bonneville, however, that not far from his quarters, they had found a wallet of fresh meat and a cord, which they supposed had been left by some prowling Blackfeet. A few days afterwards, Mr. Cerré, with the remainder of his men, likewise arrived at the cantonment.

Mr. Walker, one of the subleaders, who had gone with a band of twenty hunters, to range the country just beyond the Horse Prairie, had likewise his share of adventures with the all-pervading Blackfeet. At one of his encampments, the guard stationed to keep watch round the camp grew weary of their duty, and feeling a little too secure, and too much at home on these prairies, retired to a small grove of willows, to amuse themselves with a social game of cards called "old sledge," which is as popular among the trampers of the prairies, as whist or *ecarté* among the polite circles of the cities. From the midst of their sport, they were suddenly roused by a discharge of firearms, and a shrill war-whoop. Starting on their feet, and snatching up their rifles, they beheld in dismay their horses and mules already in possession of the enemy, who had stolen upon the camp unperceived, while they were spell-bound by the magic of old sledge. The Indians sprang upon the animals barebacked, and endeavoured to urge them off under a galling fire, that did some execution. The mules, however, confounded by the hurly-burly, and disliking their new riders, kicked up their heels and dismounted half of them, in spite of their horsemanship. This threw the rest into confusion; they endeavoured to protect their unhorsed comrades from the furious assaults of the whites; but, after a scene of "confusion worse confounded," horses and mules were abandoned, and the Indians betook themselves to the bushes. Here they quickly scratched holes in the earth, about two feet deep, in which they prostrated themselves, and while thus screened from the shots of the white men, were enabled to make such use of their bows and arrows, and fusees, as to repulse their assailants, and to effect their retreat. This adventure threw a temporary stigma upon the game of "old sledge."

In the course of the autumn, four Iroquois hunters, driven by the snow from their hunting grounds, made their appearance at the cantonment. They were kindly welcomed, and during their sojourn made themselves useful in a variety of ways, being excellent trappers, and first-rate woodsmen. They were of the remnants of a party of Iroquois hunters, that came from Canada into these mountain regions many years previously, in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company. They were led by a brave chieftain, named Pierre, who fell by the hands of the Blackfeet, and gave his name to the fated valley of Pierre's Hole. This branch of the Iroquois tribe

has ever since remained among these mountains, at mortal enmity with the Blackfeet, and have lost many of their prime hunters in their feuds with that ferocious race. Some of them fell in with General Ashley, in the course of one of his gallant excursions into the wilderness, and have continued ever since in the employ of the company.

Among the motley visitors to the winter quarters of Captain Bonneville, was a party of Pends Oreilles (or Hanging-ears) and their chief. These Indians have a strong resemblance, in character and customs, to the Nez Percés. They amount to about three hundred lodges, and are well armed, and possess great numbers of horses. During the spring, summer, and autumn, they hunt the buffalo about the head waters of the Missouri, Henry's fork of the Snake River, and the northern branches of Salmon River. Their winter quarters are upon the Racine Amère, where they subsist upon roots and dried buffalo meat. Upon this river the Hudson's Bay Company have established a trading post, where the Pends Oreilles and the Flatheads bring their peltries to exchange for arms, clothing, and trinkets.

This tribe, like the Nez Percés, evince strong and peculiar feelings of natural piety. Their religion is not a mere superstitious fear, like that of most savages; they evince abstract notions of morality; a deep reverence for an overruling Spirit, and a respect for the rights of their fellow-men. In one respect, their religion partakes of the pacific doctrines of the Quakers. They hold that the Great Spirit is displeased with all nations who wantonly engage in war; they abstain, therefore, from all aggressive hostilities. But though thus unoffending in their policy, they are called upon continually to wage defensive warfare, especially with the Blackfeet, with whom, in the course of their hunting expeditions, they come in frequent collision, and have desperate battles. Their conduct as warriors is without fear or reproach, and they can never be driven to abandon their hunting grounds.

Like most savages, they are firm believers in dreams, and in the power and efficacy of charms and amulets, or medicines, as they term them. Some of their braves, also, who have had numerous hairbreadth 'scapes, like the old Nez Percé chief in the battle of Pierre's Hole, are believed to wear a charmed life, and to be bullet proof. Of these gifted beings marvellous anecdotes are related, which are most potently believed by

their fellow-savages, and sometimes almost credited by the white hunters.

CHAPTER XI.

WHILE Captain Bonneville and his men are sojourning among the Nez Percés, on Salmon River, we will inquire after the fortunes of those doughty rivals of the Rocky Mountains and American Fur Companies, who started off for the trapping grounds to the north-north-west.

Fitzpatrick and Bridger, of the former company, as we have already shown, having received their supplies, had taken the lead, and hoped to have the first sweep of the hunting ground. Vanderburgh and Dripps, however, the two resident partners of the opposite company, by extraordinary exertions, were enabled soon to put themselves upon their traces, and pressed forward with such speed as to overtake them just as they had reached the heart of the beaver country. In fact, being ignorant of the best trapping grounds, it was their object to follow on, and profit by the superior knowledge of the other party.

Nothing could equal the chagrin of Fitzpatrick and Bridger, at being dogged by their inexperienced rivals; especially after their offer to divide the country with them. They tried in every way to blind and baffle them; to steal a march upon them, or lead them on a wrong scent; but all in vain. Vanderburgh made up by activity and intelligence, for his ignorance of the country; was always wary, always on the alert; discovered every movement of his rivals, however secret, and was not to be eluded or misled.

Fitzpatrick and his colleague now lost all patience: since the others persisted in following them, they determined to give them an unprofitable chase, and to sacrifice the hunting season, rather than share the products with their rivals. They accordingly took up their line of march down the course of the Missouri, keeping the main Blackfoot trail, and tramping doggedly forward, without stopping to set a single trap. The others beat the hoof after them for some time, but by degrees began to perceive that they were on a wild-goose chase, and getting into a country perfectly barren to the trapper. They now came to a halt, and bethought themselves how to make up for lost time, and improve the remainder of the season.

It was thought best to divide their forces and try different trapping grounds. While Dripps went in one direction, Vanderburgh, with about fifty men, proceeded in another. The latter, in his headlong march, had got into the very heart of the Blackfoot country, yet seems to have been unconscious of his danger. As his scouts were out one day, they came upon traces of a recent band of savages. There were the deserted fires still smoking, surrounded by the carcasses of buffaloes just killed. It was evident a party of Blackfeet had been frightened from their hunting camp, and had retreated, probably to seek reinforcements. The scouts hastened back to the camp, and told Vanderburgh what they had seen. He made light of the alarm, and, taking nine men with him, galloped off to reconnoitre for himself. He found the deserted hunting camp just as they had represented it; there lay the carcasses of buffaloes, partly dismembered; there were the smouldering fires, still sending up their wreaths of smoke: everything bore traces of recent and hasty retreat; and gave reason to believe that the savages were still lurking in the neighbourhood. With heedless daring, Vanderburgh put himself upon their trail, to trace them to their place of concealment. It led him over prairies, and through skirts of woodland, until it entered a dark and dangerous ravine. Vanderburgh pushed in, without hesitation, followed by his little band. They soon found themselves in a gloomy dell, between steep banks overhung with trees; where the profound silence was only broken by the tramp of their own horses.

Suddenly the horrid war-whoop burst on their ears, mingled with the sharp report of rifles, and a legion of savages sprang from their concealments, yelling, and shaking their buffalo robes to frighten the horses. Vanderburgh's horse fell, mortally wounded by the first discharge. In his fall, he pinned his rider to the ground; who called in vain upon his men to assist in extricating him. One was shot down and scalped a few paces distant; most of the others were severely wounded, and sought their safety in flight. The savages approached to despatch the unfortunate leader, as he lay struggling beneath his horse. He had still his rifle in his hand, and his pistols in his belt. The first savage that advanced received the contents of the rifle in his breast, and fell dead upon the spot; but before Vanderburgh could draw a pistol, a blow from a tomahawk laid him prostrate, and he was despatched by repeated wounds.

Such was the fate of Major Henry Vanderburgh: one of the best and worthiest leaders of the American Fur Company; who, by his manly bearing and dauntless courage, is said to have made himself universally popular among the bold-hearted rovers of the wilderness.

Those of the little band who escaped fled in consternation to the camp, and spread direful reports of the force and ferocity of the enemy. The party being without a head were in complete confusion and dismay, and made a precipitate retreat, without attempting to recover the remains of their butchered leader. They made no halt until they reached the encampment of the Pends Oreilles, or Hanging-ears, where they offered a reward for the recovery of the body, but without success; it never could be found.

In the meantime Fitzpatrick and Bridger, of the Rocky Mountain Company, fared but little better than their rivals. In their eagerness to mislead them, they had betrayed themselves into danger, and got into a region infested with the Blackfeet. They soon found that foes were on the watch for them; but they were experienced in Indian warfare, and not to be surprised at night, nor drawn into an ambush in the daytime. As the evening advanced, the horses were all brought in and picketed, and a guard was stationed round the camp. At the earliest streak of day one of the leaders would mount his horse, and gallop off full speed for about half a mile; then look round for Indian trails, to ascertain whether there had been any lurkers round the camp: returning slowly, he would reconnoitre every ravine and thicket where there might be an ambush. This done, he would gallop off in an opposite direction and repeat the same scrutiny. Finding all things safe, the horses would be turned loose to graze; but always under the eye of a guard.

A caution equally vigilant was observed in the march, on approaching any defile or place where an enemy might lie in wait; and scouts were always kept in the advance, or along the ridges and rising grounds on the flanks.

At length, one day, a large band of Blackfeet appeared in the open field, but in the vicinity of rocks and cliffs. They kept at a wary distance, but made friendly signs. The trappers replied in the same way, but likewise kept aloof. A small party of Indians now advanced, bearing the pipe of peace; they were met by an equal number of white men, and

they formed a group, midway between the two bands, where the pipe was circulated from hand to hand, and smoked with all due ceremony. An instance of natural affection took place at this pacific meeting. Among the free trappers in the Rocky Mountain band was a spirited young Mexican, named Loretto; who, in the course of his wanderings, had ransomed a beautiful Blackfoot girl from a band of Crows by whom she had been captured. He made her his wife, after the Indian style, and she had followed his fortunes ever since, with the most devoted affection.

Among the Blackfeet warriors who advanced with the calumet of peace, she recognised a brother. Leaving her infant with Loretto, she rushed forward and threw herself upon her brother's neck; who clasped his long lost sister to his heart, with a warmth of affection but little compatible with the reputed stoicism of the savage.

While this scene was taking place, Bridger left the main body of trappers, and rode slowly towards the group of smokers, with his rifle resting across the pommel of his saddle. The chief of the Blackfeet stepped forward to meet him. From some unfortunate feeling of distrust, Bridger cocked his rifle just as the chief was extending his hand in friendship. The quick ear of the savage caught the clink of the lock; in a twinkling, he grasped the barrel, forced the muzzle downward, and the contents were discharged into the earth at his feet. His next movement was to wrest the weapon from the hand of Bridger, and fell him with it to the earth. He might have found this no easy task, had not the unfortunate leader received two arrows in his back during the struggle.

The chief now sprang into the vacant saddle and galloped off to his band. A wild hurry-scurry scene ensued; each party took to the banks, the rocks, and trees, to gain favourable positions, and an irregular firing was kept up on either side, without much effect. The Indian girl had been hurried off by her people, at the outbreak of the affray. She would have returned, through the dangers of the fight, to her husband and her child, but was prevented by her brother. The young Mexican saw her struggles and her agony, and heard her piercing cries. With a generous impulse, he caught up the child in his arms, rushed forward, regardless of Indian shaft or rifle, and placed it in safety upon her bosom. Even the savage heart of the Blackfoot chief was reached by this

noble deed. He pronounced Loretto a madman for his temerity, but bade him depart in peace. The young Mexican hesitated: he urged to have his wife restored to him, but her brother interfered, and the countenance of the chief grew dark. The girl, he said, belonged to his tribe—she must remain with her people. Loretto would still have lingered, but his wife implored him to depart, lest his life should be endangered. It was with the greatest reluctance that he returned to his companions.

The approach of night put an end to the skirmishing fire of the adverse parties, and the savages drew off without renewing their hostilities. We cannot but remark, that both in this affair, and in that at Pierre's Hole, the affray commenced by a hostile act on the part of white men, at the moment when the Indian warrior was extending the hand of amity. In neither instance, as far as circumstances have been stated to us by different persons, do we see any reason to suspect the savage chiefs of perfidy in their overtures of friendship. They advanced in the confiding way, usual among Indians when they bear the pipe of peace, and consider themselves sacred from attack. If we violate the sanctity of this ceremonial, by any hostile movement on our part, it is we who incur the charge of faithlessness; and we doubt not, that in both these instances, the white men have been considered by the Blackfeet as the aggressors, and have, in consequence, been held up as men not to be trusted.

A word to conclude the romantic incident of Loretto and his Indian bride. A few months subsequent to the event just related, the young Mexican settled his accounts with the Rocky Mountain Company, and obtained his discharge. He then left his comrades and set off to rejoin his wife and child among her people; and we understand that, at the time we are writing these pages, he resides at a trading-house established of late by the American Fur Company, in the Blackfoot country, where he acts as an interpreter, and has his Indian girl with him.

CHAPTER XII.

FOR the greater part of the month of November, Captain Bonneville remained in his temporary post on Salmon River.

He was now in the full enjoyment of his wishes; leading a hunter's life in the heart of the wilderness, with all its wild populace around him. Beside his own people, motley in character and costume—creole, Kentuckian, Indian, half-breed, hired trapper, and free trapper—he was surrounded by encampments of Nez Percés and Flatheads, with their droves of horses covering the hills and plains. It was, he declares, a wild and bustling scene. The hunting parties of white men and red men, continually sallying forth and returning; the groups at the various encampments, some cooking, some working, some amusing themselves at different games; the neighing of horses, the braying of asses, the resounding strokes of the axe, the sharp report of the rifle, the whoop, the halloo, and the frequent burst of laughter, all in the midst of a region suddenly roused from perfect silence and loneliness by this transient hunters' sojourn, realized, he says, the idea of a "populous solitude."

The kind and genial character of the captain had, evidently, its influence on the opposite races thus fortuitously congregated together. The most perfect harmony prevailed between them. The Indians, he says, were friendly in their dispositions, and honest to the most scrupulous degree, in their intercourse with the white men. It is true they were somewhat importunate in their curiosity, and apt to be continually in the way, examining everything with keen and prying eye, and watching every movement of the white men. All this, however, was borne with great good-humour by the captain, and through his example by his men. Indeed, throughout all his transactions, he shows himself the friend of the poor Indians, and his conduct towards them is above all praise.

The Nez Percés, the Flatheads, and the Hanging-ears, pride themselves upon the number of their horses, of which they possess more in proportion than any other of the mountain tribes within the buffalo range. Many of the Indian warriors and hunters, encamped around Captain Bonneville, possessed from thirty to forty horses each. Their horses are stout, well built ponies, of great wind, and capable of enduring the severest hardship and fatigue. The swiftest of them, however, are those obtained from the whites, while sufficiently young to become acclimated and inured to the rough service of the mountains.

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By degrees the populousness of this encampment began to

produce its inconveniences. The immense droves of horses owned by the Indians, consumed the herbage of the surrounding hills; while, to drive them to any distant pasturage, in a neighbourhood abounding with lurking and deadly enemies, would be to endanger the loss both of man and beast. Game, too, began to grow scarce. It was soon hunted and frightened out of the vicinity, and though the Indians make a wide circuit through the mountains in the hope of driving the buffalo towards the cantonment, their expedition was unsuccessful. It was plain that so large a party could not subsist themselves there, nor in any one place, throughout the winter. Captain Bonneville, therefore, altered his whole arrangements. He detached fifty men towards the south to winter upon Snake River, and to trap about its waters in the spring, with orders to rejoin him in the month of July, at Horse Creek, in Green River valley, which he had fixed upon as the general rendezvous of his company for the ensuing year.

Of all his late party, he now retained with him merely a small number of free trappers, with whom he intended to sojourn among the Nez Percés and Flatheads, and adopt the Indian mode of moving with the game and grass. Those bands, in effect, shortly afterwards broke up their encampments and set off for a less beaten neighbourhood. Captain Bonneville remained behind for a few days, that he might secretly prepare *caches*, in which to deposit everything not required for current use. Thus lighted of all superfluous incumbrance, he set off on the 20th of November to rejoin his Indian allies. He found them encamped in a secluded part of the country, at the head of a small stream. Considering themselves out of all danger in this sequestered spot, from their old enemies, the Blackfeet, their encampment manifested the most negligent security. Their lodges were scattered in every direction, and their horses covered every hill for a great distance round, grazing upon the upland bunch grass, which grew in great abundance, and though dry, retained its nutritious properties, instead of losing them, like other grasses, in the autumn.

When the Nez Percés, Flatheads, and Pends Oreilles are encamped in a dangerous neighbourhood, says Captain Bonneville, the greatest care is taken of their horses, those prime articles of Indian wealth, and objects of Indian depredation. Each warrior has his horse tied by one foot at night to a stake

planted before his lodge. Here they remain until broad daylight; by that time the young men of the camp are already ranging over the surrounding hills. Each family then drives its horses to some eligible spot, where they are left to graze unattended. A young Indian repairs occasionally to the pasture to give them water, and to see that all is well. So accustomed are the horses to this management, that they keep together in the pasture where they have been left. As the sun sinks behind the hills, they may be seen moving from all points towards the camp, where they surrender themselves to be tied up for the night. Even in situations of danger, the Indians rarely set guards over their camp at night, intrusting that office entirely to their vigilant and well-trained dogs.

In an encampment, however, of such fancied security as that in which Captain Bonneville found his Indian friends, much of these precautions with respect to their horses are omitted. They merely drive them, at nightfall, to some sequestered little dell, and leave them there, at perfect liberty, until the morning.

One object of Captain Bonneville in wintering among these Indians was to procure a supply of horses against the spring. They were, however, extremely unwilling to part with any, and it was with great difficulty that he purchased, at the rate of twenty dollars each, a few for the use of some of his free trappers, who were on foot, and dependent on him for their equipment.

In this encampment Captain Bonneville remained from the 21st of November to the 9th of December. During this period the thermometer ranged from thirteen to forty-two degrees. There were occasional falls of snow; but it generally melted away almost immediately, and the tender blades of new grass began to shoot up among the old. On the 7th of December, however, the thermometer fell to seven degrees.

The reader will recollect that, on distributing his forces, when in Green River valley, Captain Bonneville had detached a party, headed by a leader of the name of Matthieu, with all the weak and disabled horses, to sojourn about Bear River, meet the Shoshonie bands, and afterwards to rejoin him at his winter camp on Salmon River.

More than sufficient time had elapsed, yet Matthieu failed to make his appearance, and uneasiness began to be felt on his

account. Captain Bonneville sent out four men, to range the country through which he would have to pass, and endeavour to get some information concerning him; for his route lay across the great Snake River plain, which spreads itself out like an Arabian desert, and on which a cavalcade could be descried at a great distance. The scouts soon returned, having proceeded no further than the edge of the plain, pretending that their horses were lame; but it was evident they had feared to venture, with so small a force, into these exposed and dangerous regions.

A disease, which Captain Bonneville supposed to be pneumonia, now appeared among the Indians, carrying off numbers of them, after an illness of three or four days. The worthy captain acted as physician, prescribing profuse sweatings and copious bleedings, and uniformly with success, if the patient were subsequently treated with proper care. In extraordinary cases, the poor savages called in the aid of their own doctors or conjurors, who officiated with great noise and mummery, but with little benefit. Those who died during this epidemic were buried in graves, after the manner of the whites, but without any regard to the direction of the head. It is a fact worthy of notice, that, while this malady made such ravages among the natives, not a single white man had the slightest symptom of it.

A familiar intercourse of some standing with the Pierced-nose and Flathead Indians had now convinced Captain Bonneville of their amicable and inoffensive character; he began to take a strong interest in them, and conceived the idea of becoming a pacifactor, and healing the deadly feud between them and the Blackfeet, in which they were so deplorably the sufferers. He proposed the matter to some of the leaders, and urged that they should meet the Blackfeet chiefs in a grand pacific conference, offering to send two of his men to the enemy's camp with pipe, tobacco, and flag of truce, to negotiate the proposed meeting.

The Nez Percés and Flathead sages, upon this, held a council of war of two days' duration, in which there was abundance of hard smoking and long talking, and both eloquence and tobacco were nearly exhausted. At length they came to a decision to reject the worthy captain's proposition, and upon pretty substantial grounds, as the reader may judge.

"War," said the chiefs, "is a bloody business, and full of

evil; but it keeps the eyes of the chiefs always open, and makes the limbs of the young men strong and supple. In war, every one is on the alert. If we see a trail, we know it must be an enemy; if the Blackfeet come to us, we know it is for war, and we are ready. Peace, on the other hand, sounds no alarm; the eyes of the chiefs are closed in sleep, and the young men are sleek and lazy. The horses stray into the mountains; the women and their little babes go about alone. But the heart of a Blackfoot is a lie, and his tongue is a trap. If he says peace, it is to deceive; he comes to us as a brother: he smokes his pipe with us; but when he sees us weak, and off our guard, he will slay and steal. We will have no such peace; let there be war!"

With this reasoning, Captain Bonneville was fain to acquiesce; but, since the sagacious Flatheads and their allies were content to remain in a state of warfare, he wished them, at least, to exercise the boasted vigilance which war was to produce, and to keep their eyes open. He represented to them the impossibility that two such considerable clans could move about the country without leaving trails by which they might be traced. Besides, among the Blackfeet braves were several Nez Percés, who had been taken prisoners in early youth, adopted by their captors, and trained up and imbued with warlike and predatory notions; these had lost all sympathies with their native tribe, and would be prone to lead the enemy to their secret haunts. He exhorted them, therefore, to keep upon the alert, and never to remit their vigilance, while within the range of so crafty and cruel a foe. All these counsels were lost upon his easy and simple-minded hearers. A careless indifference reigned throughout their encampments, and their horses were permitted to range the hills at night in perfect freedom. Captain Bonneville had his own horses brought in at night, and properly picketed and guarded. The evil he apprehended soon took place. In a single night, a swoop was made through the neighbouring pastures by the Blackfeet, and eighty-six of the finest horses carried off. A whip and a rope were left in a conspicuous situation by the robbers, as a taunt to the simpletons they had unhorsed.

Long before sunrise, the news of this calamity spread like wildfire through the different encampments. Captain Bonneville, whose own horses remained safe at their pickets,

watched in momentary expectation of an outbreak of warriors, Pierced-nose and Flathead, in furious pursuit of the marauders; but no such thing—they contented themselves with searching diligently over hill and dale, to glean up such horses as had escaped the hands of the marauders, and then resigned themselves to their loss with the most exemplary quiescence.

Some, it is true, who were entirely unhorsed, set out on a begging visit to their cousins, as they call them, the Lower Nez Percés, who inhabit the lower country about the Columbia, and possess horses in abundance. To these they repair when in difficulty, and seldom fail, by dint of begging and bartering, to get themselves once more mounted on horseback.

Game had now become scarce in the neighbourhood of the camp, and it was necessary, according to Indian custom, to move off to a less beaten ground. Captain Bonneville proposed the Horse Prairie; but his Indian friends objected, that many of the Nez Percés had gone to visit their cousins, and that the whites were few in number, so that their united force was not sufficient to venture upon the buffalo grounds, which were infested by bands of Blackfeet.

They now spoke of a place at no great distance, which they represented as a perfect hunter's elysium. It was on the right branch, or head stream of the river, locked up among cliffs and precipices, where there was no danger from roving bands, and where the Blackfeet dare not enter. Here, they said, the elk abounded, and the mountain sheep were to be seen trooping upon the rocks and hills. A little distance beyond it, also, herds of buffalo were to be met with, out of the range of danger. Thither they proposed to move their camp.

The proposition pleased the captain, who was desirous, through the Indians, of becoming acquainted with all the secret places of the land. Accordingly, on the 9th of December, they struck their tents, and moved forward by short stages, as many of the Indians were yet feeble from the late malady.

Following up the right fork of the river, they came to where it entered a deep gorge of the mountains, up which lay the secluded region so much vaunted by the Indians. Captain Bonneville halted, and encamped for three days before entering the gorge. In the meantime, he detached five of his

free trappers to scour the hills and kill as many elk as possible, before the main body should enter, as they would then be soon frightened away by the various Indian hunting parties.

While thus encamped, they were still liable to the marauds of the Blackfeet, and Captain Bonneville admonished his Indian friends to be upon their guard. The Nez Percés, however, notwithstanding their recent loss, were still careless of their horses; merely driving them to some secluded spot, and leaving them there for the night without setting any guard upon them. The consequence was a second swoop, in which forty-one were carried off. This was borne with equal philosophy with the first, and no effort was made either to recover the horses, or to take vengeance on the thieves.

The Nez Percés, however, grew more cautious with respect to their remaining horses, driving them regularly to the camp every evening, and fastening them to pickets. Captain Bonneville, however, told them that this was not enough. It was evident they were dogged by a daring and persevering enemy, who was encouraged by past impunity; they should, therefore, take more than usual precautions, and post a guard at night over their cavalry. They could not, however, be persuaded to depart from their usual custom. The horse once picketed, the care of the owner was over for the night, and he slept profoundly. None waked in the camp but the gamblers, who, absorbed in their play, were more difficult to be roused to external circumstances than even the sleepers.

The Blackfeet are bold enemies, and fond of hazardous exploits. The band that were hovering about the neighbourhood, finding they had such pacific people to deal with, redoubled their daring. The horses being now picketed before the lodges, a number of Blackfeet scouts penetrated in the early part of the night into the very centre of the camp. Here they went about among the lodges, as calmly and deliberately as if at home, quietly cutting loose the horses that stood picketed by the lodges of their sleeping owners. One of these prowlers, more adventurous than the rest, approached a fire, round which a group of Nez Percés were gambling with the most intense eagerness. Here he stood for some time, muffled up in his robe, peering over the shoulders of the players, watching the changes of their countenances and the fluctuations of the game. So completely engrossed were they,

that the presence of this muffled eaves-dropper was unnoticed, and having executed his bravado, he retired undiscovered.

Having cut loose as many horses as they could conveniently carry off, the Blackfeet scouts rejoined their comrades, and all remained patiently round the camp. By degrees, the horses, finding themselves at liberty, took their route towards their customary grazing ground. As they emerged from the camp, they were silently taken possession of, until, having secured about thirty, the Blackfeet sprang on their backs and scampered off. The clatter of hoofs startled the gamblers from their game. They gave the alarm, which soon roused the sleepers from every lodge. Still all was quiescent; no marshalling of forces, no saddling of steed and dashing off in pursuit, no talk of retribution for their repeated outrages. The patience of Captain Bonneville was at length exhausted. He had played the part of a pacificator without success; he now altered his tone, and resolved, if possible, to rouse their war spirit.

Accordingly, convoking their chiefs, he inveighed against their craven policy, and urged the necessity of vigorous and retributive measures, that would check the confidence and presumption of their enemies, if not inspire them with awe. For this purpose, he advised that a war party should be immediately sent off on the trail of the marauders, to follow them, if necessary, into the very heart of the Blackfoot country, and not to leave them until they had taken signal vengeance. Beside this, he recommended the organization of minor war parties, to make reprisals to the extent of the losses sustained. "Unless you rouse yourselves from your apathy," said he, "and strike some bold and decisive blow, you will cease to be considered men, or objects of manly warfare. The very squaws and children of the Blackfeet will be sent against you, while their warriors reserve themselves for nobler antagonists."

This harangue had evidently a momentary effect upon the pride of the hearers. After a short pause, however, one of the orators arose. It was bad, he said, to go to war for mere revenge. The Great Spirit had given them a heart for peace, not for war. They had lost horses, it was true, but they could easily get others from their cousins, the Lower Nez Percés, without incurring any risk; whereas, in war they should lose men, who were not so readily replaced. As to their late losses, an increased watchfulness would prevent any more

misfortunes of the kind. He disapproved, therefore, of all hostile measures; and all the other chiefs concurred in his opinion.

Captain Bonneville again took up the point. "It is true," said he, "the Great Spirit has given you a heart to love your friends, but he has also given you an arm to strike your enemies. Unless you do something speedily to put an end to this continual plundering, I must say farewell. As yet, I have sustained no loss, thanks to the precautions which you have slighted; but my property is too unsafe here; my turn will come next; I and my people will share the contempt you are bringing upon yourselves, and will be thought, like you, poor-spirited beings, who may at any time be plundered with impunity."

The conference broke up with some signs of excitement on the part of the Indians. Early the next morning, a party of thirty men set off in pursuit of the foe, and Captain Bonneville hoped to hear a good account of the Blackfoot marauders. To his disappointment, the war party came lagging back on the following day, leading a few old, sorry, broken-down horses, which the freebooters had not been able to urge to sufficient speed. This effort exhausted the martial spirit, and satisfied the wounded pride of the Nez Percés, and they relapsed into their usual state of passive indifference.

CHAPTER XIII.

STORY OF KOSATO, THE RENEGADE BLACKFOOT.

IF the meekness and long-suffering of the Pierced-noses grieved Captain Bonneville, there was another individual in the camp to whom they were still more annoying. This was a Blackfoot renegado, named Kosato, a fiery, hot-blooded youth, who, with a beautiful girl of the same tribe, had taken refuge among the Nez Percés. Though adopted into the tribe, he still retained the warlike spirit of his race, and loathed the peaceful, inoffensive habits of those around him. The hunting of the deer, the elk, and the buffalo, which was the height of their ambition, was too tame to satisfy his wild and restless nature. His heart burned for the foray, the ambush, the skirmish, the scamper, and all the haps and hazards of roving and predatory warfare.

The recent hoverings of the Blackfeet about the camp, their nightly prowls, and daring and successful marauds, had kept him in a fever and a flutter, like a hawk in a cage, who hears his late companions swooping and screaming in wild liberty above him. The attempt of Captain Bonneville to rouse the war spirit of the Nez Percés, and prompt them to retaliation, was ardently seconded by Kosato. For several days he was incessantly devising schemes of vengeance, and endeavouring to set on foot an expedition that should carry dismay and desolation into the Blackfeet towns. All his art was exerted to touch upon those springs of human action with which he was most familiar. He drew the listening savages round him by his nervous eloquence, taunted them with recitals of past wrongs and insults, drew glowing pictures of triumphs and trophies within their reach, recounted tales of daring and romantic enterprise, of secret marchings, covert lurkings, midnight surprisals, sackings, burnings, plunderings, scalpings, together with the triumphant return, and the feasting and rejoicing of the victors. These wild tales were intermingled with the beating of the drum, the yell, the war-whoop, and the war-dance, so inspiring to Indian valour. All, however, were lost upon the peaceful spirits of his hearers; not a Nez Percé was to be roused to vengeance, or stimulated to glorious war. In the bitterness of his heart, the Blackfoot renegado repined at the mishap which had severed him from a race of congenial spirits, and driven him to take refuge among beings so destitute of martial fire.

The character and conduct of this man attracted the attention of Captain Bonneville, and he was anxious to hear the reason why he had deserted his tribe, and why he looked back upon them with such deadly hostility. Kosato told him his own story briefly;—it gives a picture of the deep, strong passions that work in the bosoms of these miscalled stoics.

“You see my wife,” said he: “she is good; she is beautiful—I love her.—Yet she has been the cause of all my troubles. She was the wife of my chief. I loved her more than he did; and she knew it. We talked together; we laughed together; we were always seeking each other’s society; but we were as innocent as children. The chief grew jealous, and commanded her to speak with me no more. His heart became hard towards her; his jealousy grew more furious. He beat her without cause and without mercy; and threatened to kill her

outright, if she even looked at me. Do you want traces of his fury? Look at that scar. His rage against me was no less persecuting. War parties of the Crows were hovering round us; our young men had seen their trail. All hearts were roused for action; my horses were before my lodge. Suddenly the chief came, took them to his own pickets, and called them his own. What could I do?—he was a chief. I durst not speak, but my heart was burning. I joined no longer in the council, the hunt, or the war-feast. What had I to do there? an unhorsed, degraded warrior. I kept by myself, and thought of nothing but these wrongs and outrages.

“I was sitting one evening upon a knoll that overlooked the meadow where the horses were pastured. I saw the horses that were once mine grazing among those of the chief. This maddened me, and I sat brooding for a time over the injuries I had suffered, and the cruelties which she I loved had endured for my sake, until my heart swelled and grew sore, and my teeth were clinched. As I looked down upon the meadow, I saw the chief walking among his horses. I fastened my eyes on him as a hawk's; my blood boiled; I drew my breath hard. He went among the willows. In an instant I was on my feet; my hand was on my knife—I flew rather than ran—before he was aware, I sprang upon him, and with two blows laid him dead at my feet. I covered his body with earth, and strewed bushes over the place; then hastened to her I loved, told her what I had done, and urged her to fly with me. She only answered me with tears. I reminded her of the wrongs I had suffered, and of the blows and stripes she had endured from the deceased; I had done nothing but an act of justice. I again urged her to fly; but she only wept the more, and bade me go. My heart was heavy, but my eyes were dry. I folded my arms. ‘Tis well,’ said I; ‘Kosato will go alone to the desert. None will be with him but the wild beasts of the desert. The seekers of blood may follow on his trail. They may come upon him when he sleeps, and glut their revenge; but you will be safe. Kosato will go alone.’

“I turned away. She sprang after me, and strained me in her arms. ‘No,’ cried she, ‘Kosato shall not go alone! Wherever he goes I will go—he shall never part from me.’

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needed, and stealing quietly from the village, mounted the first horses we encountered. Speeding day and night, we soon reached this tribe. They received us with welcome, and we have dwelt with them in peace. They are good and kind; they are honest; but their hearts are the hearts of women."

Such was the story of Kosato, as related by him to Captain Bonneville. It is of a kind that often occurs in Indian life; where love elopements from tribe to tribe are as frequent as among the novel-read heroes and heroines of sentimental civilization, and often give rise to bloody and lasting feuds.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON the 19th of December Captain Bonneville and his confederate Indians raised their camp, and entered the narrow gorge made by the north fork of Salmon River. Up this lay the secure and plenteous hunting region so temptingly described by the Indians.

Since leaving Green River the plains had invariably been of loose sand or coarse gravel, and the rocky formation of the mountains of primitive limestone. The rivers, in general, were skirted with willows and bitter cotton-wood trees, and the prairies covered with wormwood. In the hollow breast of the mountains which they were now penetrating, the surrounding heights were clothed with pine; while the declivities of the lower hills afforded abundance of bunch grass for the horses.

As the Indians had represented, they were now in a natural fastness of the mountains, the ingress and egress of which was by a deep gorge, so narrow, rugged, and difficult, as to prevent secret approach or rapid retreat, and to admit of easy defence. The Blackfeet, therefore, refrained from venturing in after the Nez Percés, awaiting a better chance, when they should once more emerge into the open country.

Captain Bonneville soon found that the Indians had not exaggerated the advantages of this region. Besides numerous gangs of elk, large flocks of the ahsahta or bighorn, the mountain sheep, were to be seen bounding among the precipices. These simple animals were easily circumvented and destroyed. A few hunters may surround a flock and kill as many as they please. Numbers were daily brought into camp, and the flesh

of those which were young and fat, was extolled as superior to the finest mutton.

Here, then, there was a cessation from toil, from hunger, and alarm. Past ills and dangers were forgotten, The hunt, the game, the song, the story, the rough though good-humoured joke, made time pass joyously away, and plenty and security reigned throughout the camp.

Idleness and ease, it is said, lead to love, and love to matrimony, in civilized life, and the same process takes place in the wilderness. Filled with good cheer and mountain mutton, one of the free trappers began to repine at the solitude of his lodge, and to experience the force of that great law of nature, "it is not meet for man to live alone."

After a night of grave cogitation, he repaired to Kowsoter, the Pierced-nose chief, and unfolded to him the secret workings of his bosom.

"I want," said he, "a wife. Give me one from among your tribe. Not a young, giddy-pated girl, that will think of nothing but flaunting and finery, but a sober, discreet, hard-working squaw; one that will share my lot without flinching, however hard it may be; that can take care of my lodge, and be a companion and a helpmate to me in the wilderness," Kowsoter promised to look round among the females of his tribe and procure such a one as he desired. Two days were requisite for the search. At the expiration of these, Kowsoter called at his lodge and informed him that he would bring his bride to him in the course of the afternoon. He kept his word. At the appointed time he approached, leading the bride, a comely copper-coloured dame, attired in her Indian finery. Her father, mother, brothers by the half dozen, and cousins by the score, all followed on to grace the ceremony, and greet the new and important relative.

The trapper received his new and numerous family connection with proper solemnity; he placed his bride beside him, and, filling the pipe, the great symbol of peace, with his best tobacco, took two or three whiffs, then handed it to the chief, who transferred it to the father of the bride, from whom it was passed on from hand to hand and mouth to mouth of the whole circle of kinsmen round the fire all maintaining the most profound and becoming silence.

After several pipes had been filled and emptied in this

solemn ceremonial, the chief addressed the bride, detailing at considerable length the duties of a wife, which, among Indians, are little less onerous than those of the pack-horse; this done, he turned to her friends, and congratulated them upon the great alliance she had made. They showed a due sense of their good fortune, especially when the nuptial presents came to be distributed among the chiefs and relatives, amounting to about one hundred and eighty dollars. The company soon retired, and now the worthy trapper found, indeed, that he had no green girl to deal with; for the knowing dame at once assumed the style and dignity of a trapper's wife, taking possession of the lodge as her undisputed empire; arranging everything according to her own taste and habitudes, and appearing as much at home, and on as easy terms with the trapper, as if they had been man and wife for years.

We have already given a picture of a free trapper and his horse, as furnished by Captain Bonneville: we shall here subjoin, as a companion picture, his description of a free trapper's wife, that the reader may have a correct idea of the kind of blessing the worthy hunter in question had invoked to solace him in the wilderness.

"The free trapper, while a bachelor, has no greater pet than his horse; but the moment he takes a wife, (a sort of brevet rank in matrimony occasionally bestowed upon some Indian fair one, like the heroes of ancient chivalry, in the open field,) he discovers that he has a still more fanciful and capricious animal on which to lavish his expenses.

"No sooner does an Indian belle experience this promotion, than all her notions at once rise and expand to the dignity of her situation; and the purse of her lover, and his credit into the bargain, are tasked to the utmost to fit her out in becoming style. The wife of a free trapper to be equipped and arrayed like any ordinary and undistinguished squaw? Perish the grovelling thought! In the first place, she must have a horse for her own riding; but no jaded, sorry, earth-spirited hack; such as is sometimes assigned by an Indian husband for the transportation of his squaw and her papposes: the wife of a free trapper must have the most beautiful animal she can lay her eyes on. And then, as to his decoration: headstall, breast-bands, saddle and crupper, are lavishly embroidered with beads, and hung with thimbles, hawks' bells,

and bunches of ribands. From each side of the saddle hangs an *esquimoot*, a sort of pocket, in which she bestows the residue of her trinkets and knick-knacks, which cannot be crowded on the decoration of her horse or herself. Over this she folds, with great care, a drapery of scarlet and bright-coloured calicoes, and now considers the caparison of her steed complete.

“As to her own person, she is even still more extravagant. Her hair, esteemed beautiful in proportion to its length, is carefully plaited, and made to fall with seeming negligence over either breast. Her riding hat is stuck full of party-coloured feathers; her robe, fashioned somewhat after that of the whites, is of red, green, and sometimes gray cloth, but always of the finest texture that can be procured. Her leggins and moccasins are of the most beautiful and expensive workmanship, and fitted neatly to the foot and ankle, which with the Indian women are generally well formed and delicate. Then as to jewellery: in the way of finger-rings, ear-rings, necklaces, and other female glories, nothing within reach of the trapper’s means is omitted, that can tend to impress the beholder with an idea of the lady’s high estate. To finish the whole, she selects from among her blankets of various dyes, one of some glowing colour, and throwing it over her shoulders with a native grace, vaults into the saddle of her gay, prancing steed, and is ready to follow her mountaineer ‘to the last gasp with love and loyalty.’”

Such is the general picture of the free trapper’s wife, given by Captain Bonneville; how far it applied in its details to the one in question, does not altogether appear, though it would seem from the outset of her connubial career, that she was ready to avail herself of all the pomp and circumstance of her new condition. It is worthy of mention, that wherever there are several wives of free trappers in a camp, the keenest rivalry exists between them, to the sore detriment of their husbands’ purses. Their whole time is expended, and their ingenuity tasked by endeavours to eclipse each other in dress and decoration. The jealousies and heart-burnings thus occasioned among these, so styled, children of nature, are equally intense with those of the rival leaders of style and fashion in the luxurious abodes of civilized life.

The genial festival of Christmas, which throughout all Christendom lights up the fireside of home with mirth and jollity, followed hard upon the wedding just described.

Though far from kindred and friends, Captain Bonneville and his handful of free trappers were not disposed to suffer the festival to pass unenjoyed ; they were in a region of good cheer, and were disposed to be joyous ; so it was determined to "light up the yule clog," and celebrate a merry Christmas in the heart of the wilderness.

On Christmas eve, accordingly, they began their rude fêtes and rejoicings. In the course of the night the free trappers surrounded the lodge of the Pierced-nose chief, and in lieu of Christmas Carols, saluted him with a *feu de joie*.

Kowsoter received it in a truly Christian spirit, and after a speech, in which he expressed his high gratification at the honour done him, invited the whole company to a feast on the following day. His invitation was gladly accepted. A Christmas dinner in the wigwam of an Indian chief ! There was novelty in the idea. Not one failed to be present. The banquet was served up in primitive style : skins of various kinds, nicely dressed for the occasion, were spread upon the ground ; upon these were heaped abundance of venison, elk meat, and mountain mutton ; with various bitter roots, which the Indians use as condiments.

After a short prayer, the company all seated themselves cross-legged, in Turkish fashion, to the banquet, which passed off with great hilarity. After which various games of strength and agility, by both white men and Indians, closed the Christmas festivities.

CHAPTER XV.

THE continued absence of Matthieu and his party had, by this time, caused great uneasiness in the mind of Captain Bonneville ; and, finding there was no dependence to be placed upon the perseverance and courage of scouting parties, in so perilous a quest, he determined to set out himself on the search, and to keep on until he should ascertain something of the object of his solicitude.

Accordingly, on the 26th of December, he left the camp, accompanied by thirteen stark trappers and hunters, all well mounted and armed for dangerous enterprise. On the following morning they passed out at the edge of the mountain gorge, and sallied forth into the open plain. As they confi-

dently expected a brush with the Blackfeet, or some other predatory horde, they moved with great circumspection, and kept vigilant watch in their encampments.

In the course of another day they left the main branch of Salmon River, and proceeded south towards a pass called John Day's defile. It was severe and arduous travelling. The plains were swept by keen and bitter blasts of wintry wind; the ground was generally covered with snow, game was scarce, so that hunger generally prevailed in the camp, while the want of pasturage soon began to manifest itself in the declining vigour of the horses.

The party had scarcely encamped on the afternoon of the 28th, when two of the hunters who had sallied forth in quest of game came galloping back in great alarm. While hunting they had perceived a party of savages, evidently manœuvring to cut them off from the camp; and nothing had saved them from being entrapped but the speed of their horses.

These tidings struck dismay into the camp. Captain Bonneville endeavoured to re-assure his men by representing the position of their encampment, and its capability of defence. He then ordered the horses to be driven in and picketed, and threw up a rough breastwork of fallen trunks of trees, and the vegetable rubbish of the wilderness. Within this barrier was maintained a vigilant watch throughout the night, which passed away without alarm. At early dawn they scrutinized the surrounding plain, to discover whether any enemies had been lurking about during the night: not a foot-print, however, was to be discovered in the coarse gravel with which the plain was covered.

Hunger now began to cause more uneasiness than the apprehensions of surrounding enemies. After marching a few miles they encamped at the foot of a mountain, in hopes of finding buffalo. It was not until the next day that they discovered a pair of fine bulls on the edge of the plain, among rocks and ravines. Having now been two days and a half without a mouthful of food, they took especial care that these animals should not escape them. While some of the surest marksmen advanced cautiously with their rifles into the rough ground, four of the best mounted horsemen took their stations in the plain, to run the bulls down should they only be maimed.

The buffalo were wounded, and set off in headlong flight.

The half-famished horses were too weak to overtake them on the frozen ground, but succeeded in driving them on the ice, where they slipped and fell, and were easily dispatched. The hunters loaded themselves with beef for present and future supply, and then returned and encamped at the last night's fire. Here they passed the remainder of the day, cooking and eating with a voracity proportioned to previous starvation; forgetting in the hearty revel of the moment, the certain dangers with which they were environed.

The cravings of hunger being satisfied, they now began to debate about their further progress. The men were much disheartened by the hardships they had already endured. Indeed, two who had been in the rear guard, taking advantage of their position, had deserted and returned to the lodges of the Nez Percés. The prospect ahead was enough to stagger the stoutest heart. They were in the dead of winter. As far as the eye could reach the wild landscape was wrapped in snow; which was evidently deepening as they advanced. Over this they would have to toil, with the icy wind blowing in their faces: their horses might give out through want of pasturage; and they themselves must expect intervals of horrible famine like that they had already experienced.

With Captain Bonneville, however, perseverance was a matter of pride; and having undertaken this enterprise, nothing could turn him back until it was accomplished: though he declares that, had he anticipated the difficulties and sufferings which attended it, he should have flinched from the undertaking.

Onward, therefore, the little band urged their way, keeping along the course of a stream called John Day's creek. The cold was so intense that they had frequently to dismount and travel on foot, lest they should freeze in their saddles. The days, which, at this season, are short enough even in the open prairies, were narrowed to a few hours by the high mountains, which allowed the travellers but a brief enjoyment of the cheering rays of the sun. The snow was, generally, at least twenty inches in depth, and in many places much more; those who dismounted had to beat their way with toilsome steps. Eight miles were considered a good day's journey. The horses were almost famished; for the herbage was covered with the deep snow, so that they had nothing to subsist upon but scanty whisps of the dry bunch grass which peered above the

surface, and the small branches and twigs of frozen willows and wormwood.

In this way they urged their slow and painful course to the south, down John Day's creek, until it lost itself in a swamp. Here they encamped upon the ice among stiffened willows, where they were obliged to beat down and clear away the snow to procure pasturage for their horses.

Hence, they toiled on to Godin River; so called after an Iroquois hunter in the service of Sublette, who was murdered there by the Blackfeet. Many of the features of this remote wilderness are thus named after scenes of violence and bloodshed that occurred to the early pioneers. It was an act of filial vengeance on the part of Godin's son, Antoine, that, as the reader may recollect, brought on the recent battle at Pierre's Hole.

From Godin's River, Captain Bonneville and his followers came out upon the plain of the Three Buttes; so called from three singular and isolated hills that rise from the midst. It is a part of the great desert of Snake River, one of the most remarkable tracts beyond the mountains. Could they have experienced a respite from their sufferings and anxieties, the immense landscape spread out before them was calculated to inspire admiration. Winter has its beauties and glories, as well as summer; and Captain Bonneville had the soul to appreciate them.

"Far away," says he, "over the vast plains, and up the steep sides of the lofty mountains, the snow lay spread in dazzling whiteness; and whenever the sun emerged in the morning above the giant peaks, or burst forth from among clouds in his mid-day course, mountain and dell, glazed rock and frosted tree, glowed and sparkled with surpassing lustre. The tall pines seemed sprinkled with a silver dust, and the willows, studded with minute icicles reflecting the prismatic rays, brought to mind the fairy trees conjured up by the caliph's story-teller, to adorn his vale of diamonds."

The poor wanderers, however, nearly starved with hunger and cold, were in no mood to enjoy the glories of these brilliant scenes; though they stamped pictures on their memory, which have been recalled with delight in more genial situations.

Encamping at the west Bute, they found a place swept by the winds, so that it was bare of snow, and there was abun-

dance of bunch grass. Here the horses were turned loose to graze throughout the night. Though for once they had ample pasturage, yet the keen winds were so intense, that, in the morning, a mule was found frozen to death. The trappers gathered round and mourned over him as over a cherished friend. They feared their half-famished horses would soon share his fate, for there seemed scarce blood enough left in their veins to withstand the freezing cold. To beat the way further through the snow with these enfeebled animals, seemed next to impossible; and despondency began to creep over their hearts, when, fortunately, they discovered a trail made by some hunting party. Into this they immediately entered, and proceeded with less difficulty. Shortly afterward, a fine buffalo bull came bounding across the snow, and was instantly brought down by the hunters. A fire was soon blazing and crackling, and an ample repast soon cooked, and sooner dispatched, after which, they made some further progress and then encamped. One of the men reached the camp nearly frozen to death; but good cheer and a blazing fire gradually restored life, and put his blood in circulation.

Having now a beaten path, they proceeded the next morning with more facility; indeed, the snow decreased in depth as they receded from the mountains, and the temperature became mild. In the course of the day, they discovered a solitary horseman hovering at a distance before them on the plain. They spurred on to overtake him; but he was better mounted on a fresher steed, and kept at a wary distance, reconnoitring them with evident distrust; for the wild dress of the free trappers, their leggins, blankets, and cloth caps garnished with fur and topped off with feathers, even their very elf-locks and weather-bronzed complexions, gave them the look of Indians rather than white men, and made him mistake them for a war party of some hostile tribe.

After much manœuvring, the wild horseman was at length brought to a parley; but even then he conducted himself with the caution of a knowing prowler of the prairies. Dismounting from his horse, and using him as a breastwork, he levelled his gun across his back, and, thus prepared for defence, like a wary cruiser upon the high seas, he permitted himself to be approached within speaking distance.

He proved to be an Indian of the Banneck tribe, belonging to a band at no great distance. It was some time before he

could be persuaded that he was conversing with a party of white men, and induced to lay aside his reserve and join them. He then gave them the interesting intelligence that there were two companies of white men encamped in the neighbourhood. This was cheering news to Captain Bonneville; who hoped to find in one of them the long-sought party of Matthieu. Pushing forward, therefore, with renovated spirits, he reached Snake River by nightfall, and there fixed his encampment.

Early the next morning (13th January, 1833) diligent search was made about the neighbourhood for traces of the reported parties of white men. An encampment was soon discovered, about four miles further up the river; in which Captain Bonneville, to his great joy, found two of Matthieu's men, from whom he learnt that the rest of his party would be there in the course of a few days. It was a matter of great pride and self-gratulation to Captain Bonneville, that he had thus accomplished his dreary and doubtful enterprise; and he determined to pass some time in this encampment, both to await the return of Matthieu, and to give needful repose to men and horses.

It was, in fact, one of the most eligible and delightful wintering grounds in that whole range of country. The Snake River here wound its devious way between low banks through the great plain of the Three Buttes; and was bordered by wide and fertile meadows. It was studded with islands, which, like the alluvial bottoms, were covered with groves of cotton-wood, thickets of willow, tracts of good low-land grass, and abundance of green rushes. The adjacent plains were so vast in extent, that no single band of Indians could drive the buffalo out of them; nor was the snow of sufficient depth to give any serious inconvenience. Indeed, during the sojourn of Captain Bonneville in this neighbourhood, which was in the heart of winter, he found the weather, with the exception of a few cold and stormy days, generally mild and pleasant; freezing a little at night, but invariably thawing with the morning's sun—resembling the spring weather in the middle parts of the United States.

The lofty range of the Three Tetons, those great landmarks of the Rocky Mountains, rising in the east, and circling away to the north and west of the great plain of Snake River; and the mountains of Salt River and Portneuf towards the south, catch the earliest falls of snow. Their white robes

lengthen as the winter advances, and spread themselves far into the plain, driving the buffalo in herds to the banks of the river in quest of food; where they are easily slain in great numbers.

Such were the palpable advantages of this winter encampment; added to which, it was secure from the prowlings and plunderings of any petty band of roving Blackfeet; the difficulties of retreat rendering it unwise for those crafty depredators to venture an attack, unless with an overpowering force.

About ten miles below the encampment lay the Banneck Indians; numbering about one hundred and twenty lodges. They are brave and cunning warriors, and deadly foes of the Blackfeet; whom they easily overcome in battles where their forces are equal. They are not vengeful and enterprising in warfare, however; seldom sending war parties to attack the Blackfeet towns, but contenting themselves with defending their own territories and homes. About one-third of their warriors are armed with fusees; the rest with bows and arrows.

As soon as the spring opens, they move down the right bank of Snake River, and encamp at the heads of the Boisé and Payette. Here their horses wax fat on good pasturage, while the tribe revels in plenty upon the flesh of deer, elk, bear, and beaver. They then descend a little further, and are met by the Lower Nez Percés, with whom they trade for horses; giving in exchange beaver, buffalo, and buffalo robes. Hence they strike upon the tributary streams on the left bank of Snake River, and encamp at the rise of the Portneuf and Blackfoot streams, in the buffalo range. Their horses, although of the Nez Percé breed, are inferior to the parent stock, from being ridden at too early an age; being often bought when but two years old, and immediately put to hard work. They have fewer horses, also, than most of these migratory tribes.

At the time that Captain Bonneville came into the neighborhood of these Indians, they were all in mourning for their chief, surnamed The Horse. This chief was said to possess a charmed life, or rather, to be invulnerable to lead; no bullet having ever hit him, though he had been in repeated battles, and often shot at by the surest marksmen. He had shown great magnanimity in his intercourse with the white

men. One of the great men of his family had been slain in an attack upon a band of trappers passing through the territories of his tribe. Vengeance had been sworn by the Bannecks; but The Horse interfered, declaring himself the friend of white men, and, having great influence and authority among his people, he compelled them to forego all vindictive plans, and to conduct themselves amicably whenever they came in contact with the traders.

This chief had bravely fallen in resisting an attack made by the Blackfeet upon his tribe, while encamped at the head of Godin River. His fall in nowise lessened the faith of his people in his charmed life; for they declared that it was not a bullet which laid him low, but a bit of horn which had been shot into him by some Blackfoot marksman; aware, no doubt, of the inefficacy of lead. Since his death, there was no one with sufficient influence over the tribe to restrain the wild and predatory propensities of the young men. The consequence was, they had become troublesome and dangerous neighbours; openly friendly, for the sake of traffic, but disposed to commit secret depredations, and to molest any small party that might fall within their reach.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON the 3rd of February, Matthieu, with the residue of his band, arrived in camp. He had a disastrous story to relate. After parting with Captain Bonneville in Green River valley, he had proceeded to the westward, keeping to the north of the Eutaw Mountains, a spur of the great Rocky chain. Here he experienced the most rugged travelling for his horses, and soon discovered that there was but little chance of meeting the Shoshonie bands. He now proceeded along Bear River, a stream much frequented by trappers; intending to shape his course to Salmon River, to rejoin Captain Bonneville.

He was misled, however, either through the ignorance or treachery, of an Indian guide, and conducted into a wild valley, where he lay encamped during the autumn and the early part of the winter, nearly buried in snow, and almost starved. Early in the season he detached five men, with nine horses, to proceed to the neighbourhood of the Sheep Rock, on Bear River, where game was plenty, and there to procure a supply

for the camp. They had not proceeded far on their expedition, when their trail was discovered by a party of nine or ten Indians, who immediately commenced a lurking pursuit, dogging them secretly for five or six days. So long as their encampments were well chosen, and a proper watch maintained, the wary savages kept aloof; at length, observing that they were badly encamped, in a situation where they might be approached with secrecy, the enemy crept stealthily along under cover of the river bank, preparing to burst suddenly upon their prey.

They had not advanced within striking distance, however, before they were discovered by one of the trappers. He immediately, but silently, gave the alarm to his companions. They all sprang upon their horses, and prepared to retreat to a safe position. One of the party, however, named, Jennings, doubted the correctness of the alarm, and, before he mounted his horse, wanted to ascertain the fact. His companions urged him to mount, but in vain; he was incredulous and obstinate. A volley of fire-arms by the savages dispelled his doubts; but so overpowered his nerves, that he was unable to get into his saddle. His comrades, seeing his peril and confusion, generously leapt from their horses to protect him. A shot from a rifle brought him to the earth; in his agony he called upon the others not to desert him. Two of them, Le Roy and Ross, after fighting desperately, were captured by the savages; the remaining two vaulted into their saddles, and saved themselves by headlong flight, being pursued for nearly thirty miles. They got safe back to Matthieu's camp, where their story inspired such dread of lurking Indians, that the hunters could not be prevailed upon to undertake another foray in quest of provisions. They remained, therefore, almost starving in their camp; now and then killing an old or disabled horse for food, while the elk and the mountain sheep roamed unmolested amongst the surrounding mountains.

The disastrous surprisal of this hunting party is cited by Captain Bonneville to show the importance of vigilant watching and judicious encampments in the Indian country. Most of these kind of disasters to traders and trappers arise from some careless inattention to the state of their arms and ammunition, the placing of their horses at night, the position of their camping ground, and the posting of their night watches. The Indian is a vigilant and crafty foe; by no means given to

harebrained assaults; he seldom attacks when he finds his foe well prepared and on the alert. Caution is at least as efficacious a protection against him as courage.

The Indians who made this attack were at first supposed to be Blackfeet; until Captain Bonneville found, subsequently, in the camp of the Bannecks a horse, saddle, and bridle, which he recognized as having belonged to one of the hunters. The Bannecks, however, stoutly denied having taken these spoils in fight, and persisted in affirming that the outrage had been perpetrated by a Blackfoot band.

Captain Bonneville remained on Snake River nearly three weeks after the arrival of Matthieu and his party. At length his horses having recovered strength sufficient for a journey, he prepared to return to the Nez Percés, or rather to visit his *caches* on Salmon River; that he might take thence goods and equipments for the opening season. Accordingly, leaving sixteen men at Snake River, he set out, on the 19th February, with sixteen others, on his journey to the caches.

Fording the river, he proceeded to the borders of the deep snow, when he encamped under the lee of immense piles of burnt rock. On the 21st he was again floundering through the snow, on the great Snake River plain, where it lay to the depth of thirty inches. It was sufficiently incrustated to bear a pedestrian; but the poor horses broke through the crust, and plunged and strained at every step. So lacerated were they by the ice, that it was necessary to change the front every hundred yards, and put a different one in the advance, to break the way. The open prairies were swept by a piercing and biting wind from the north-west. At night, they had to task their ingenuity to provide shelter and keep from freezing. In the first place, they dug deep holes in the snow, piling it up in ramparts to windward, as a protection against the blast. Beneath these, they spread buffalo skins; upon which they stretched themselves in full dress, with caps, cloaks, and moccasins, and covered themselves with numerous blankets; notwithstanding all which, they were often severely pinched with the cold.

On the 28th of February, they arrived on the banks of Godin River. This stream emerges from the mountains opposite an eastern branch of the Malade River, running south-east, forms a deep and swift current about twenty yards wide, passing rapidly through a defile to which it gives its name,

and then enters the great plain, where, after meandering about forty miles, it is finally lost in the region of the Burnt Rocks.

On the banks of this river, Captain Bonneville was so fortunate as to come upon a buffalo trail. Following it up, he entered the defile, where he remained encamped for two days, to allow the hunters time to kill and dry a supply of buffalo beef. In this sheltered defile, the weather was moderate, and grass was already sprouting more than an inch in height. There was abundance, too, of the salt weed; which grows most plentiful in clayey and gravelly barrens. It resembles pennyroyal, and derives its name from a partial saltiness. It is a nourishing food for the horses in the winter, but they reject it the moment the young grass affords sufficient pasturage.

On the 6th of March, having cured sufficient meat, the party resumed their march, and moved on with comparative ease, excepting where they had to make their way through snow-drifts which had been piled up by the wind.

On the 11th, a small cloud of smoke was observed rising in a deep part of the defile. An encampment was instantly formed, and scouts were sent out to reconnoitre. They returned with intelligence that it was a hunting party of Flat-heads, returning from the buffalo range laden with meat. Captain Bonneville joined them the next day, and persuaded them to proceed with his party a few miles below, to the caches, whither he proposed also to invite the Nez Percés whom he hoped to find somewhere in this neighbourhood. In fact, on the 13th, he was rejoined by that friendly tribe, who since he separated from them on Salmon River, had likewise been out to hunt the buffalo, but had continued to be haunted and harassed by their old enemies the Blackfeet, who as usual, had contrived to carry off many of their horses.

In the course of this hunting expedition, a small band of ten lodges separated from the main body, in search of better pasturage for their horses. About the 1st of March, the scattered parties of Blackfoot banditti united to the number of three hundred fighting men, and determined upon some signal blow. Proceeding to the former camping ground of the Nez Percés, they found the lodges deserted; upon which, they hid themselves among the willows and thickets, watching for some straggler, who might guide them to the present "whereabout" of their intended victims. As fortune would

have it, Kosato, the Blackfoot renegade, was the first to pass along, accompanied by his blood-bought bride. He was on his way from the main body of hunters to the little band of ten lodges. The Blackfeet knew and marked him as he passed; he was within bowshot of their ambushade; yet, much as they thirsted for his blood, they forbore to launch a shaft; sparing him for the moment, that he might lead them to their prey. Secretly following his trail, they discovered the lodges of the unfortunate Nez Percés, and assailed them with shouts and yellings. The Nez Percés numbered only twenty men, and but nine were armed with fusees. They showed themselves, however, as brave and skilful in war as they had been mild and long-suffering in peace. Their first care was to dig holes inside of their lodges; thus ensconced, they fought desperately, laying several of the enemy dead upon the ground; while they, though some of them were wounded, lost not a single warrior.

During the heat of the battle, a woman of the Nez Percés, seeing her warrior badly wounded and unable to fight, seized his bow and arrows, and bravely and successfully defended his person, contributing to the safety of the whole party.

In another part of the field of action, a Nez Percé had crouched behind the trunk of a fallen tree, and kept up a galling fire from his covert. A Blackfoot seeing this, procured a round log, and placing it before him as he lay prostrate, rolled it forward towards the trunk of the tree behind which his enemy lay crouched. It was a moment of breathless interest: whoever first showed himself would be in danger of a shot. The Nez Percé put an end to the suspense. The moment the logs touched, he sprang upon his feet, and discharged the contents of his fusee into the back of his antagonist. By this time, the Blackfeet had got possession of the horses; several of their warriors lay dead on the field, and the Nez Percés, ensconced in their lodges, seemed resolved to defend themselves to the last gasp. It so happened that the chief of the Blackfeet party was a renegade from the Nez Percés; unlike Kosato, however, he had no vindictive rage against his native tribe, but was rather disposed, now he had got the booty, to spare all unnecessary effusion of blood. He held a long parley, therefore, with the besieged, and finally drew off his warriors, taking with him seventy horses. It appeared, afterwards, that the bullets of the Blackfeet had

been entirely expended in the course of the battle, so that they were obliged to make use of stones as substitutes.

At the outset of the fight, Kosato, the renegade, fought with fury rather than valour: animating the others by word as well as deed. A wound in the head from a rifle ball laid him senseless on the earth. There his body remained when the battle was over, and the victors were leading off the horses. His wife hung over him with frantic lamentations. The conquerors paused and urged her to leave the lifeless renegade, and return with them to her kindred. She refused to listen to their solicitations, and they passed on. As she sat watching the features of Kosato, and giving way to passionate grief, she thought she perceived him to breathe. She was not mistaken. The ball, which had been nearly spent before it struck him, had stunned instead of killing him. By the ministry of his faithful wife, he gradually recovered; reviving to a redoubled love for her, and hatred of his tribe.

As to the female who had so bravely defended her husband, she was elevated by the tribe to a rank far above her sex, and, beside other honourable distinctions, was thenceforward permitted to take a part in the war dances of the braves!

CHAPTER XVII.

CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE found his caches perfectly secure, and having secretly opened them, he selected such articles as were necessary to equip the free trappers, and to supply the considerable trade with the Indians, after which he closed them again. The free trappers, being newly rigged out and supplied, were in high spirits, and swaggered gaily about the camp. To compensate all hands for past sufferings, and to give a cheerful spur to further operations, Captain Bonneville now gave the men what, in frontier phrase, is termed "a regular blow out." It was a day of uncouth gambols and frolics and rude feasting. The Indians joined in the sports and games, and all was mirth and good fellowship.

It was now the middle of March, and Captain Bonneville made preparations to open the spring campaign. He had pitched upon Malade River for his main trapping ground for the season. This is a stream which rises among the great bed of mountains north of the Lava Plain, and, after a wind-

ing course, falls into Snake River. Previous to his departure the captain dispatched Mr. Cerré with a few men, to visit the Indian villages and purchase horses; he furnished his clerk, Mr. Hodgkiss, also, with a small stock of goods, to keep up a trade with the Indians during the spring, for such peltries as they might collect, appointing the caches on Salmon River as the point of rendezvous, where they were to rejoin him on the 15th of June following.

This done, he set out for Malade River with a band of twenty-eight men, composed of hired and free trappers, and Indian hunters, together with eight squaws. Their route lay up along the right fork of Salmon River, as it passes through the deep defile of the mountains. They travelled very slowly, not above five miles a day, for many of the horses were so weak that they faltered and staggered as they walked. Pasturage, however, was now growing plentiful. There was abundance of fresh grass, which in some places had attained such height as to wave in the wind. The native flocks of the wilderness, the mountain sheep, as they are called by the trappers, were continually to be seen upon the hills between which they passed, and a good supply of mutton was provided by the hunters, as they were advancing towards a region of scarcity.

In the course of his journey, Captain Bonneville had occasion to remark an instance of the many notions, and almost superstitions, which prevail among the Indians, and among some of the white men, with respect to the sagacity of the beaver. The Indian hunters of his party were in the habit of exploring all the streams along which they passed, in search of "beaver lodges," and occasionally set their traps with some success. One of them, however, though an experienced and skilful trapper, was invariably unsuccessful. Astonished and mortified at such unusual bad luck, he at length conceived the idea, that there was some odour about his person, of which the beaver got scent, and retreated at his approach. He immediately set about a thorough purification. Making a rude sweating house on the banks of the river, he would shut himself up until in a reeking perspiration, and then suddenly emerging, would plunge into the river. A number of these sweatings and plungings having, as he supposed, rendered his person perfectly "inodorous," he resumed his trapping with renovated hope.

About the beginning of April, they encamped upon Godin's River, where they found the swamp full of "musk-rat houses." Here, therefore, Captain Bonneville determined to remain a few days and make his first regular attempt at trapping. That his maiden campaign might open with spirit, he promised the Indians and free trappers an extra price for every musk-rat they should take. All now set to work for the next day's sport. The utmost animation and gaiety prevailed throughout the camp. Everything looked auspicious for their spring campaign. The abundance of musk-rats in the swamp was but an earnest of the nobler game they were to find when they should reach the Malade River, and have a capital beaver country all to themselves, where they might trap at their leisure without molestation.

In the midst of their gaiety, a hunter came galloping into the camp, shouting, or rather yelling, "A trail! a trail!—lodge poles! lodge poles!"

These were words full of meaning to a trapper's ear. They intimated that there was some band in the neighbourhood, and probably a hunting party, as they had lodge poles for an encampment. The hunter came up and told his story. He had discovered a fresh trail, in which the traces made by the dragging of lodge poles were distinctly visible. The buffalo, too, had just been driven out of the neighbourhood, which showed that the hunters had already been on the range.

The gaiety of the camp was at an end; all preparations for musk-rat trapping were suspended, and all hands sallied forth to examine the trail. Their worst fears were soon confirmed. Infallible signs showed the unknown party in the advance to be white men; doubtless, some rival band of trappers. Here was competition when least expected; and that, too, by a party already in the advance, who were driving the game before them. Captain Bonneville had now a taste of the sudden transitions to which a trapper's life is subject. The buoyant confidence in an uninterrupted hunt was at an end; every countenance lowered with gloom and disappointment.

Captain Bonneville immediately dispatched two spies to overtake the rival party, and endeavour to learn their plans; in the meantime, he turned his back upon the swamp and its musk-rat houses, and followed on at "long camps," which, in trapper's language, is equivalent to long stages. On the 6th of April, he met his spies returning. They had kept on the

trail like hounds, until they overtook the party at the south end of Godin's defile. Here they found them comfortably encamped, twenty-two prime trappers, all well appointed, with excellent horses in capital condition, led by Milton Sublette, and an able coadjutor, named Jarvie, and in full march for the Malade hunting ground.

This was stunning news. The Malade River was the only trapping ground within reach; but to have to compete there with veteran trappers, perfectly at home among the mountains, and admirably mounted, while they were so poorly provided with horses and trappers, and had but one man in their party acquainted with the country—it was out of the question!

The only hope that now remained was that the snow, which still lay deep among the mountains of Godin River, and blocked up the usual pass to the Malade country, might detain the other party, until Captain Bonneville's horses should get once more into good condition in their present ample pasturage.

The rival parties now encamped together, not out of companionship, but to keep an eye upon each other. Day after day passed by, without any possibility of getting to the Malade country. Sublette and Jarvie endeavoured to force their way across the mountain; but the snows lay so deep as to oblige them to turn back. In the meantime, the captain's horses were daily gaining strength, and their hoofs improving, which had been worn and battered by mountain service. The captain, also, was increasing his stock of provisions, so that the delay was all in his favour.

To any one who merely contemplates a map of the country, this difficulty of getting from Godin to Malade River will appear inexplicable, as the intervening mountains terminate in the great Snake River plain, so that, apparently, it would be perfectly easy to proceed round their bases.

Here, however, occur some of the striking phenomena of this wild and sublime region. The great lower plain which extends to the feet of these mountains is broken up near their bases into crests and ridges, resembling the surges of the ocean breaking on a rocky shore.

In a line with the mountains, the plain is gashed with numerous and dangerous chasms, from four to ten feet wide, and of great depth. Captain Bonneville attempted to sound

some of these openings, but without any satisfactory result. A stone dropped into one of them reverberated against the sides for apparently a very great depth, and, by its sound, indicated the same kind of substance with the surface, as long as the strokes could be heard. The horse, instinctively sagacious in avoiding danger, shrinks back in alarm from the least of these chasms: pricking up his ears, snorting and pawing, until permitted to turn away.

We have been told by a person well acquainted with the country, that it is sometimes necessary to travel fifty and sixty miles, to get round one of these tremendous ravines. Considerable streams, like that of Godin's River, that run with a bold, free current, lose themselves in this plain; some of them end in swamps, others suddenly disappear; finding, no doubt, subterranean outlets.

Opposite to these chasms, Snake River makes two desperate leaps over precipices, at a short distance from each other; one twenty, the other forty feet in height.

The volcanic plain in question forms an area of about sixty miles in diameter, where nothing meets the eye but a desolate and awful waste; where no grass grows nor water runs, and where nothing is to be seen but lava. Ranges of mountains skirt this plain, and, in Captain Bonneville's opinion, were formerly connected, until rent asunder by some convulsion of nature. Far to the east, the Three Tetons lift their heads sublimely, and dominate this wide sea of lava;—one of the most striking features of a wilderness where everything seems on a scale of stern and simple grandeur.

We look forward with impatience for some able geologist to explore this sublime, but almost unknown region.

It was not until the 25th of April, that the two parties of trappers broke up their encampments, and undertook to cross over the south-west end of the mountain by a pass explored by their scouts. From various points of the mountain, they commanded boundless prospects of the lava plain, stretching away in cold and gloomy barrenness as far as the eye could reach. On the evening of the 26th, they reached the plain west of the mountain, watered by the Malade, the Boisée, and other streams, which comprised the contemplated trapping ground.

The country about the Boisée (or Woody) River is extolled by Captain Bonneville as the most enchanting he had seen in

the Far West; presenting the mingled grandeur and beauty of mountain and plain—of bright running streams and vast grassy meadows waving to the breeze.

We shall not follow the captain throughout his trapping campaign, which lasted until the beginning of June, nor detail all the manœuvres of the rival trapping parties, and their various schemes to outwit and out-trap each other. Suffice it to say, that after having visited and camped about various streams with various success, Captain Bonneville set forward early in June for the appointed rendezvous at the caches. On the way, he treated his party to a grand buffalo hunt. The scouts had reported numerous herds in a plain beyond an intervening height. There was an immediate halt; the fleetest horses were forthwith mounted, and the party advanced to the summit of the hill. Hence they beheld the great plain below absolutely swarming with buffalo. Captain Bonneville now appointed the place where he would encamp; and towards which the hunters were to drive the game. He cautioned the latter to advance slowly, reserving the strength and speed of the horses, until within a moderate distance of the herds. Twenty-two horsemen descended cautiously into the plain, conformably to these directions. "It was a beautiful sight," says the captain, "to see the runners, as they are called, advancing in column, at a slow trot, until within two hundred and fifty yards of the outskirts of the herd, then dashing on at full speed, until lost in the immense multitude of buffaloes scouring the plain in every direction." All was now tumult and wild confusion. In the meantime, Captain Bonneville and the residue of the party moved on to the appointed camping ground; thither the most expert runners succeeded in driving numbers of buffalo, which were killed hard by the camp, and the flesh transported thither without difficulty. In a little while the whole camp looked like one great slaughter house; the carcasses were skilfully cut up, great fires were made, scaffolds erected for drying and jerking beef, and an ample provision was made for future subsistence. On the 15th of June, the precise day appointed for the rendezvous, Captain Bonneville and his party arrived safely at the caches.

Here he was joined by the other detachments of his main party, all in good health and spirits. The *caches* were again opened, supplies of various kinds taken out, and a liberal al-

lowance of *aqua vitæ* distributed throughout the camp, to celebrate with proper conviviality this merry meeting.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HAVING now a pretty strong party, well armed and equipped, Captain Bonneville no longer felt the necessity of fortifying himself in the secret places and fastnesses of the mountains, but sallied forth boldly into the Snake River plain, in search of his clerk, Hodgkiss, who had remained with the Nez Percés. He found him on the 24th of June, and learnt from him another chapter of misfortunes which had recently befallen that ill-fated race.

After the departure of Captain Bonneville, in March, Kosato, the renegade Blackfoot, had recovered from the wound received in battle; and with his strength revived all his deadly hostility to his native tribe. He now resumed his efforts to stir up the Nez Percés to reprisals upon their old enemies; reminding them incessantly of all the outrages and robberies they had recently experienced, and assuring them that such would continue to be their lot, until they proved themselves men by some signal retaliation.

The impassioned eloquence of the desperado, at length produced an effect, and a band of braves enlisted under his guidance, to penetrate into the Blackfoot country, harass their villages, carry off their horses, and commit all kinds of depredations.

Kosato pushed forward on his foray, as far as the Horse Prairie, where he came upon a strong party of Blackfeet. Without waiting to estimate their force, he attacked them with characteristic fury, and was bravely seconded by his followers. The contest, for a time, was hot and bloody; at length, as is customary with these two tribes, they paused, and held a long parley, or rather a war of words.

"What need," said the Blackfoot chief, tauntingly "have the Nez Percés to leave their homes, and sally forth on war parties, when they have danger enough at their own doors? If you want fighting return to your villages, you will have plenty of it there. The Blackfeet warriors have hitherto made war upon you as children. They are now coming as men. A

great force is at hand ; they are on their way to your towns, and are determined to rub out the very name of the Nez Percés from the mountains. Return, I say, to your towns, and fight there, if you wish to live any longer as a people."

Kosato took him at his word, for he knew the character of his native tribe. Hastening back with his band to the Nez Percés village, he told all that he had seen and heard, and urged the most prompt and strenuous measures for defence. The Nez Percés, however, heard him with their accustomed phlegm : the threat of the Blackfeet had been often made, and as often proved a mere bravado ; such they pronounced it to be at present, and, of course, took no precautions.

They were soon convinced that it was no empty menace. In a few days, a band of three hundred Blackfeet warriors appeared upon the hills. All now was consternation in the village. The force of the Nez Percés was too small to cope with the enemy in open fight ; many of the young men having gone to their relatives on the Columbia to procure horses. The sages met in hurried council. What was to be done to ward off a blow which threatened annihilation ? In this moment of imminent peril, a Pierced-nose chief, named Blue John by the whites, offered to approach secretly with a small, but chosen band, through a defile which led to the encampment of the enemy, and, by a sudden onset, to drive off the horses. Should this blow be successful, the spirit and strength of the invaders would be broken, and the Nez Percés, having horses, would be more than a match for them. Should it fail, the village would not be worse off than at present, when destruction appeared inevitable.

Twenty-nine of the choicest warriors instantly volunteered to follow Blue John in this hazardous enterprise. They prepared for it with the solemnity and devotion peculiar to the tribe. Blue John consulted his medicine, or talismanic charm, such as every chief keeps in his lodge as a supernatural protection. The oracle assured him that his enterprise would be completely successful provided no rain should fall before he had passed through the defile ; but should it rain, his band would be utterly cut off.

The day was clear and bright, and John anticipated that the skies would be propitious. He departed in high spirits with his forlorn hope ; and never did band of braves make a more gallant display—horsemen and horses being decorated

and equipped in the fiercest and most glaring style—glittering with arms and ornaments, and fluttering with feathers.

The weather continued serene, until they reached the defile ; but just as they were entering it, a black cloud rose over the mountain crest, and there was a sudden shower. The warriors turned to their leader as if to read his opinion of this unlucky omen ; but the countenance of Blue John remained unchanged, and they continued to press forward. It was their hope to make their way undiscovered to the very vicinity of the Blackfoot camp ; but they had not proceeded far in the defile, when they met a scouting party of the enemy. They attacked and drove them among the hills, and were pursuing them with great eagerness, when they heard shouts and yells behind them, and beheld the main body of the Blackfeet advancing.

The second chief wavered a little at the sight, and proposed an instant retreat. “ We came to fight ! ” replied Blue John sternly. Then giving his war whoop, he sprang forward to the conflict. His braves followed him. They made a headlong charge upon the enemy ; not with the hope of victory, but the determination to sell their lives dearly. A frightful carnage, rather than a regular battle, succeeded. The forlorn band laid heaps of their enemies dead at their feet, but were overwhelmed with numbers, and pressed into a gorge of the mountain, where they continued to fight until they were cut to pieces. One only of the thirty survived. He sprang on the horse of a Blackfoot warrior whom he had slain, and escaping at full speed, brought home the baleful tidings to his village.

Who can paint the horror and desolation of the inhabitants ? The flower of their warriors laid low, and a ferocious enemy at their doors. The air was rent by the shrieks and lamentations of the women, who, casting off their ornaments, and tearing their hair, wandered about, frantically bewailing the dead, and predicting destruction to the living. The remaining warriors armed themselves for obstinate defence ; but showed, by their gloomy looks and sullen silence, that they considered defence hopeless. To their surprise, the Blackfeet refrained from pursuing their advantage ; perhaps satisfied with the blood already shed, or disheartened by the loss they had themselves sustained. At any rate, they disappeared from the hills, and it was soon ascertained that they had returned to the Horse Prairie.

The unfortunate Nez Percés now began once more to

breathe. A few of their warriors, taking pack-horses, repaired to the defile to bring away the bodies of their slaughtered brethren. They found them mere headless trunks; and the wounds with which they were covered, showed how bravely they had fought. Their hearts, too, had been torn out and carried off; a proof of their signal valour; for in devouring the heart of a foe renowned for bravery, or who has distinguished himself in battle, the Indian victor thinks he appropriates to himself the courage of the deceased.

Gathering the mangled bodies of the slain, and strapping them across their pack-horses, the warriors returned, in dismal procession, to the village. The tribe came forth to meet them; the women with piercing cries and wailings; the men with downcast countenances, in which gloom and sorrow seemed fixed as if in marble. The mutilated and almost undistinguishable bodies were placed in rows upon the ground, in the midst of the assemblage; and the scene of heart-rending anguish and lamentation that ensued, would have confounded those who insist on Indian stoicism.

Such was the disastrous event that had overwhelmed the Nez Percés tribe, during the absence of Captain Bonneville; and he was informed that Kosato, the renegade, who, being stationed in the village, had been prevented from going on the forlorn hope, was again striving to rouse the vindictive feelings of his adopted brethren, and to prompt them to revenge the slaughter of their devoted braves.

During his sojourn on the Snake River plain, Captain Bonneville made one of his first essays at the strategy of the fur trade. There was at this time an assemblage of Nez Percés, Flatheads, and Cottonois Indians, encamped together upon the plain; well provided with beaver, which they had collected during the spring. These they were waiting to traffic with a resident trader of the Hudson's Bay Company, who was stationed among them, and with whom they were accustomed to deal. As it happened, the trader was almost entirely destitute of Indian goods; his spring supply not having yet reached him. Captain Bonneville had secret intelligence that the supplies were on their way, and would soon arrive; he hoped, however, by a prompt move, to anticipate their arrival, and secure the market to himself. Throwing himself, therefore, among the Indians, he opened his packs of merchandise, and displayed the most tempting wares;

bright cloths, and scarlet blankets, and glittering ornaments, and everything gay and glorious in the eyes of warrior or squaw ; all, however, was in vain. The Hudson's Bay trader was a perfect master of his business, thoroughly acquainted with the Indians he had to deal with, and held such control over them, that none dared to act openly in opposition to his wishes : nay, more—he came nigh turning the tables upon the captain, and shaking the allegiance of some of his free trappers, by distributing liquors among them. The latter, therefore, was glad to give up a competition, where the war was likely to be carried into his own camp.

In fact, the traders of the Hudson's Bay Company have advantages over all competitors in the trade beyond the Rocky Mountains. That huge monopoly centres within itself not merely its own hereditary and long-established power and influence ; but also those of its ancient rival, but now integral part, the famous Northwest Company. It has thus its races of traders, trappers, hunters, and voyageurs, born and brought up in its service, and inheriting from preceding generations a knowledge and aptitude in everything connected with Indian life, and Indian traffic. In the process of years, this company has been enabled to spread its ramifications in every direction ; its system of intercourse is founded upon a long and intimate knowledge of the character and necessities of the various tribes ; and of all the fastnesses, defiles, and favourable hunting grounds of the country. Their capital, also, and the manner in which their supplies are distributed at various posts, or forwarded by regular caravans, keep their traders well supplied, and enable them to furnish their goods to the Indians at a cheap rate. Their men, too, being chiefly drawn from the Canadas, where they enjoy great influence and control, are engaged at the most trifling wages, and supported at little cost ; the provisions which they take with them being little more than Indian corn and grease. They are brought, also, into the most perfect discipline and subordination, especially when their leaders have once got them to their scene of action in the heart of the wilderness.

These circumstances combine to give the leaders of the Hudson's Bay Company a decided advantage over all the American companies that come within their range ; so that any close competition with them is almost hopeless.

Shortly after Captain Bonneville's ineffectual attempt to

participate in the trade of the associated camp, the supplies of the Hudson's Bay Company arrived; and the resident trader was enabled to monopolize the market.

It was now the beginning of July; in the latter part of which month, Captain Bonneville had appointed a rendezvous at Horse Creek, in Green River valley, with some of the parties which he had detached in the preceding year. He now turned his thoughts in that direction, and prepared for the journey.

The Cottonois were anxious for him to proceed at once to their country; which, they assured him, abounded in beaver. The lands of this tribe lie immediately north of those of the Flatheads, and are open to the inroads of the Blackfeet. It is true, the latter professed to be their allies; but they had been guilty of so many acts of perfidy, that the Cottonois had, latterly, renounced their hollow friendship, and attached themselves to the Flatheads and Nez Percés. These they had accompanied in their migrations, rather than remain alone at home, exposed to the outrages of the Blackfeet. They were now apprehensive that these marauders would range their country during their absence, and destroy the beaver: this was their reason for urging Captain Bonneville to make it his autumnal hunting ground. The latter, however, was not to be tempted: his engagements required his presence at the rendezvous in Green River valley; and he had already formed his ulterior plans.

An unexpected difficulty now arose. The free trappers suddenly made a stand, and declined to accompany him. It was a long and weary journey; the route lay through Pierre's Hole, and other mountain passes infested by the Blackfeet, and recently the scenes of sanguinary conflicts. They were not disposed to undertake such unnecessary toils and dangers, when they had good and secure trapping grounds nearer at hand, on the head waters of Salmon River.

As these were free and independent fellows, whose will and whim were apt to be law—who had the whole wilderness before them, "where to choose," and the trader of a rival company at hand, ready to pay for their services—it was necessary to bend to their wishes. Captain Bonneville fitted them out, therefore, for the hunting ground in question; appointing Mr. Hodgkiss to act as their partisan, or leader, and fixing a rendezvous where he should meet them in the

course of the ensuing winter. The brigade consisted of twenty-one free trappers, and four or five hired men as camp-keepers. This was not the exact arrangement of a trapping party; which, when accurately organized, is composed of two-thirds trappers, whose duty leads them continually abroad in pursuit of game; and one-third camp-keepers, who cook, pack, and unpack; set up the tents, take care of the horses, and do all other duties usually assigned by the Indians to their women. This part of the service is apt to be fulfilled by French creoles from Canada and the valley of the Mississippi.

In the meantime, the associated Indians, having completed their trade and received their supplies, were all ready to disperse in various directions. As there was a formidable band of Blackfeet just over a mountain to the north-east, by which Hodgkiss and his free trappers would have to pass; and as it was known that those sharp-sighted marauders had their scouts out, watching every movement of the encampments, so as to cut off stragglers or weak detachments, Captain Bonneville prevailed upon the Nez Précés to accompany Hodgkiss and his party, until they should be beyond the range of the enemy.

The Cottonois, and the Pends Oreilles, determined to move together at the same time, and to pass close under the mountain infested by the Blackfeet; while Captain Bonneville, with his party, was to strike in an opposite direction to the south-east, bending his course for Pierre's Hole, on his way to Green River.

Accordingly, on the 6th of July, all the camps were raised at the same moment; each party taking its separate route. The scene was wild and picturesque: the long line of traders, trappers, and Indians, with their rugged and fantastic dresses and accoutrements; their varied weapons, their innumerable horses, some under saddle, some burthened with packages, others following in droves; all stretching in lengthening cavalcades across the vast landscape, and making for different points of the plains and mountains.

CHAPTER XIX.

As the route of Captain Bonneville lay through what was considered the most perilous part of this region of dangers, he took all his measures with military skill, and observed the strictest circumspection. When on the march, a small scouting party was thrown in the advance, to reconnoitre the country through which they were to pass. The encampments were selected with great care, and a watch was kept up night and day. The horses were brought in and picketed at night, and at daybreak a party was sent out to scour the neighbourhood for half a mile round, beating up every grove and thicket that could give shelter to a lurking foe. When all was reported safe, the horses were cast loose and turned out to graze. Were such precautions generally observed by traders and hunters, we should not so often hear of parties being surprised by the Indians.

Having stated the military arrangements of the captain, we may here mention a mode of defence on the open prairie, which we have heard from a veteran in the Indian trade. When a party of trappers is on a journey with a convoy of goods or peltries, every man has three pack-horses under his care; each horse laden with three packs. Every man is provided with a picket with an iron head, a mallet, and hobbles, or leathern fetters for the horses. The trappers proceed across the prairie in a long line; or sometimes three parallel lines, sufficiently distant from each other to prevent the packs from interfering. At an alarm, when there is no covert at hand, the line wheels so as to bring the front to the rear and form a circle. All then dismount, drive their pickets into the ground in the centre, fasten the horses to them, and hobble their fore legs, so that, in case of alarm, they cannot break away. They then unload them, and dispose of their packs as breastworks on the periphery of the circle; each man having nine packs behind which to shelter himself. In this promptly-formed fortress, they await the assault of the enemy, and are enabled to set large bands of Indians at defiance.

The first night of his march, Captain Bonneville encamped upon Henry's Fork; an upper branch of Snake River, called after the first American trader that erected a fort beyond the mountains. About an hour after all hands had come to a halt

the clatter of hoofs was heard, and a solitary female of the Nez Percé tribe, came galloping up. She was mounted on a mustang, or half-wild horse, which she managed by a long rope hitched round the under jaw by way of bridle. Dismounting, she walked silently into the midst of the camp, and there seated herself on the ground, still holding her horse by the long halter.

The sudden and lonely apparition of this woman, and her calm, yet resolute demeanour, awakened universal curiosity. The hunters and trappers gathered round, and gazed on her as something mysterious. She remained silent, but maintained her air of calmness and self-possession. Captain Bonneville approached and interrogated her as to the object of her mysterious visit. Her answer was brief but earnest—"I love the whites—I will go with them." She was forthwith invited to a lodge, of which she readily took possession, and from that time forward was considered one of the camp.

In consequence, very probably, of the military precautions of Captain Bonneville, he conducted his party in safety through this hazardous region. No accident of a disastrous kind occurred, excepting the loss of a horse, which, in passing along the giddy edge of the precipice, called the Cornice, a dangerous pass between Jackson's and Pierre's Hole, fell over the brink and was dashed to pieces.

On the 13th of July, (1833,) Captain Bonneville arrived at Green River. As he entered the valley, he beheld it strewn in every direction with the carcasses of buffaloes. It was evident that Indians had recently been there, and in great numbers. Alarmed at this sight, he came to a halt, and as soon as it was dark, sent out spies to his place of rendezvous on Horse Creek, where he had expected to meet with his detached parties of trappers on the following day. Early in the morning, the spies made their appearance in the camp, and with them came three trappers of one of his bands, from the rendezvous, who told him his people were all there expecting him. As to the slaughter among the buffaloes, it had been made by a friendly band of Shoshonies, who had fallen in with one of his trapping parties, and accompanied them to the rendezvous. Having imparted this intelligence, the three worthies from the rendezvous broached a small keg of "alcohol," which they had brought with them, to enliven this merry meeting. The liquor went briskly round; all absent

friends were toasted, and the party moved forward to the rendezvous in high spirits,

The meeting of associated bands, who have been separated from each other on these hazardous enterprizes, is always interesting; each having its tale of perils and adventures to relate. Such was the case with the various detachments of Captain Bonneville's company, thus brought together on Horse Creek. Here was the detachment of fifty men which he had sent from Salmon River, in the preceding month of November, to winter on Snake River. They had met with many crosses and losses in the course of their spring hunt, not so much from Indians as from white men. They had come in competition with rival trapping parties, particularly one belonging to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company; and they had long stories to relate of their manœuvres to forestall or distress each other. In fact, in these virulent and sordid competitions, the trappers of each party were more intent upon injuring their rivals, than benefiting themselves; breaking each other's traps, trampling and tearing to pieces the beaver lodges, and doing everything in their power to mar the success of the hunt. We forbear to detail these pitiful contentions.

The most lamentable tale of disasters, however, that Captain Bonneville had to hear, was from a partisan, whom he had detached in the preceding year, with twenty men to hunt through the outskirts of the Crow country, and on the tributary streams of the Yellowstone; whence he was to proceed and join him in his winter quarters on Salmon River. This partisan appeared at the rendezvous without his party, and a sorrowful tale of disasters had he to relate. In hunting the Crow country, he fell in with a village of that tribe; notorious rogues, jockeys, and horse stealers, and errant scamperers of the mountains. These decoyed most of his men to desert, and carry off horses, traps, and accoutrements. When he attempted to retake the deserters, the Crow warriors ruffled up to him and declared the deserters were their good friends, had determined to remain among them, and should not be molested. The poor partisan, therefore, was fain to leave his vagabonds among these birds of their own feather, and, being too weak in numbers to attempt the dangerous pass across the mountains to meet Captain Bonneville on Salmon River, he made, with the few that remained faithful to him, for the neighbourhood of Tullock's Fort, on the Yellowstone, under the protection of which he went to winter quarters.

He soon found out that the neighbourhood of the fort was nearly as bad as the neighbourhood of the Crows. His men were continually stealing away thither, with whatever beaver skins they could secrete or lay their hands on. These they would exchange with the hangers-on of the fort for whisky, and then revel in drunkenness and debauchery.

The unlucky partisan made another move. Associating with his party a few free trappers, whom he met with in this neighbourhood, he started off early in the spring to trap on the head waters of Powder River. In the course of the journey, his horses were so much jaded in traversing a steep mountain, that he was induced to turn them loose to graze during the night. The place was lonely; the path was rugged; there was not the sign of an Indian in the neighbourhood; not a blade of grass that had been turned by a footstep. But who can calculate on security in the midst of the Indian country, where the foe lurks in silence and secrecy, and seems to come and go on the wings of the wind? The horses had scarce been turned loose, when a couple of Arickara (or Rickaree) warriors entered the camp. They affected a frank and friendly demeanour; but their appearance and movements awakened the suspicions of some of the veteran trappers, well versed in Indian wiles. Convinced that they were spies sent on some sinister errand, they took them in custody, and set to work to drive in the horses. It was too late—the horses were already gone. In fact, a war party of Arickaras had been hovering on their trail for several days, watching with the patience and perseverance of Indians, for some moment of negligence and fancied security, to make a successful swoop. The two spies had evidently been sent into the camp to create a diversion, while their confederates carried off the spoil.

The unlucky partisan, thus robbed of his horses, turned furiously on his prisoners, ordered them to be bound hand and foot, and swore to put them to death unless his property were restored. The robbers, who soon found that their spies were in captivity, now made their appearance on horseback, and held a parley. The sight of them, mounted on the very horses they had stolen, set the blood of the mountaineers in a ferment; but it was useless to attack them, as they would have but to turn their steeds and scamper out of the reach of pedestrians. A negotiation was now attempted. The Arickaras offered what they considered fair terms; to barter one horse, or even two horses, for a prisoner. The mountaineers spurned

at the offer, and declared that, unless all the horses were relinquished, the prisoners should be burnt to death. To give force to their threat, a pyre of logs and fagots was heaped up and kindled into a blaze.

The parley continued; the Arickaras released one horse and then another, in earnest of their proposition; finding, however, that nothing short of the relinquishment of all their spoils would purchase the lives of the captives, they abandoned them to their fate, moving off with many parting words and lamentable howlings. The prisoners seeing them depart, and knowing the horrible fate that awaited them, made a desperate effort to escape. They partially succeeded, but were severely wounded and retaken; then dragged to the blazing pyre, and burnt to death in the sight of their retreating comrades.

Such are the savage cruelties that white men learn to practise, who mingle in savage life; and such are the acts that lead to terrible recrimination on the part of the Indians. Should we hear of any atrocities committed by the Arickaras upon captive white men, let this signal and recent provocation be borne in mind. Individual cases of the kind dwell in the recollections of whole tribes; and it is a point of honour and conscience to revenge them.

The loss of his horses completed the ruin of the unlucky partisan. It was out of his power to prosecute his hunting, or to maintain his party; the only thought now was how to get back to civilized life. At the first water-course, his men built canoes, and committed themselves to the stream. Some engaged themselves at various trading establishments at which they touched, others got back to the settlements. As to the partisan, he found an opportunity to make his way to the rendezvous at Green River valley; which he reached in time to render to Captain Bonneville this forlorn account of his misadventures.

CHAPTER XX.

THE Green River valley was at this time the scene of one of those general gatherings of traders, trappers, and Indians, that we have already mentioned. The three rival companies, which, for a year past had been endeavouring to out-trade, out-trap, and outwit each other, were here encamped in close proximity,

awaiting their annual supplies. About four miles from the rendezvous of Captain Bonneville was that of the American Fur Company, hard by which, was that also of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

After the eager rivalry and almost hostility displayed by these companies in their late campaigns, it might be expected that, when thus brought in juxtaposition, they would hold themselves warily and sternly aloof from each other, and, should they happen to come in contact, brawl and bloodshed would ensue.

No such thing! Never did rival lawyers, after a wrangle at the bar, meet with more social good humour at a circuit dinner. The hunting season over, all past tricks and manœuvres are forgotten, all feuds and bickerings buried in oblivion. From the middle of June to the middle of September, all trapping is suspended; for the beavers are then shedding their furs, and their skins are of little value. This, then, is the trapper's holiday, when he is all for fun and frolic, and ready for a saturnalia among the mountains.

At the present season, too, all parties were in good humour. The year had been productive. Competition, by threatening to lessen their profits, had quickened their wits, roused their energies, and made them turn every favourable chance to the best advantage; so that, on assembling at their respective places of rendezvous, each company found itself in possession of a rich stock of peltries.

The leaders of the different companies, therefore, mingled on the terms of perfect good fellowship; interchanging visits, and regaling each other in the best style their respective camps afforded. But the rich treat for the worthy captain was to see the "chivalry" of the various encampments, engaged in contests of skill at running, jumping, wrestling, shooting with the rifle, and running horses. And then their rough hunter's feastings and carousals. They then drank together, they sang, they laughed, they whooped; they tried to outbrag and outlie each other in stories of their adventures and achievements. Here the free trappers were in all their glory; they considered themselves the "cocks of the walk," and always carried the highest crests. Now and then familiarity was pushed too far, and would effervesce into a brawl, and a "rough and tumble" fight; but it all ended in cordial reconciliation and maudlin endearment.

The presence of the Shoshonie tribe contributed occasionally to cause temporary jealousies and feuds. The Shoshonie beauties became objects of rivalry among some of the amorous mountaineers. Happy was the trapper who could muster up a red blanket, a string of gay beads, or a paper of precious vermilion, with which to win the smiles of a Shoshonie fair one.

The caravans of supplies arrived at the valley just at this period of gallantry and good-fellowship. Now commenced a scene of eager competition and wild prodigality at the different encampments. Bales were hastily ripped open, and their motley contents poured forth. A mania for purchasing spread itself throughout the several bands,—munitions for war, for hunting, for gallantry, were seized upon with equal avidity—rifles, hunting knives, traps, scarlet cloth, red blankets, gairish beads, and glittering trinkets, were bought at any price, and scores run up without any thought how they were ever to be rubbed off. The free trappers, especially, were extravagant in their purchases. For a free mountaineer to pause at a paltry consideration of dollars and cents, in the attainment of any object that might strike his fancy, would stamp him with the mark of a beast in the estimation of his comrades. For a trader to refuse one of these free and flourishing blades a credit, whatever unpaid scores might stare him in the face, would be a flagrant affront scarcely to be forgiven.

Now succeeded another outbreak of revelry and extravagance. The trappers were newly fitted out and arrayed, and dashed about with their horses caparisoned in Indian style. The Shoshonie beauties also flaunted about in all the colours of the rainbow. Every freak of prodigality was indulged to its full extent, and in a little while most of the trappers, having squandered away all their wages, and perhaps run knee-deep in debt, were ready for another hard campaign in the wilderness.

During this season of folly and frolic, there was an alarm of mad wolves in the two lower camps. One or more of these animals entered the camps for three nights successively, and bit several of the people.

Captain Bonneville relates the case of an Indian, who was a universal favourite in the lower camp. He had been bitten by one of these animals. Being out with a party shortly afterwards, he grew silent and gloomy, and lagged behind the

rest as if he wished to leave them. They halted and urged him to move faster, but he entreated them not to approach him, and leaping from his horse, began to roll frantically on the earth, gnashing his teeth and foaming at the mouth. Still he retained his senses, and warned his companions not to come near him, as he should not be able to restrain himself from biting them. They hurried off to obtain relief; but on their return he was nowhere to be found. His horse and his accoutrements remained upon the spot. Three or four days afterwards a solitary Indian, believed to be the same, was observed crossing a valley, and pursued; but he darted away into the fastnesses of the mountains, and was seen no more.

Another instance we have from a different person who was present in the encampment. One of the men of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company had been bitten. He set out shortly afterwards, in company with two white men, on his return to the settlements. In the course of a few days he showed symptoms of hydrophobia, and became raving towards night. At length, breaking away from his companions, he rushed into a thicket of willows where they left him to his fate!

CHAPTER XXI.

CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE now found himself at the head of a hardy, well-seasoned, and well-appointed company of trappers, all benefited by at least one year's experience among the mountains, and capable of protecting themselves from Indian wiles and stratagems, and of providing for their subsistence whenever game was to be found. He had, also, an excellent troop of horses, in prime condition, and fit for hard service. He determined, therefore, to strike out into some of the bolder parts of his scheme. One of these was to carry his expeditions into some of the unknown tracts of the Far West, beyond what is generally termed the buffalo range. This would have something of the merit and charm of discovery, so dear to every brave and adventurous spirit. Another favourite project was to establish a trading post on the lower part of the Columbia River, near the Multnomah valley, and to endeavour to retrieve for his country some of the lost trade of Astoria.

The first of the above-mentioned views was, at present,

uppermost in his mind—the exploring of unknown regions. Among the grand features of the wilderness about which he was roaming, one had made a vivid impression on his mind, and been clothed by his imagination with vague and ideal charms. This is a great lake of salt water, laving the feet of the mountains, but extending far to the west-south-west, into one of those vast and elevated plateaus of land, which range high above the level of the Pacific.

Captain Bonneville gives a striking account of the lake when seen from the land. “As you ascend the mountains about its shores,” says he, “you behold this immense body of water spreading itself before you, and stretching further and further, in one wide and far-reaching expanse, until the eye wearied with continued and strained attention, rests in the blue dimness of distance, upon lofty ranges of mountains, confidently asserted to rise from the bosom of the waters. Nearer to you, the smooth and unruffled surface is studded with little islands, where the mountain sheep roam in considerable numbers. What extent of lowland may be encompassed by the high peaks beyond, must remain for the present matter of mere conjecture; though from the form of the summits, and the breaks which may be discovered among them, there can be little doubt that they are the sources of streams calculated to water large tracts, which are probably concealed from view by the rotundity of the lake’s surface. At some future day, in all probability, the rich harvest of beaver fur, which may be reasonably anticipated in such a spot, will tempt adventurers to reduce all this doubtful region to the palpable certainty of a beaten track. At present, however, destitute of the means of making boats, the trapper stands upon the shore, and gazes upon a promised land which his feet are never to tread.”

Such is the somewhat fanciful view which Captain Bonneville gives of this great body of water. He has evidently taken part of his ideas concerning it from the representations of others, who have somewhat exaggerated its features. It is reported to be about one hundred and fifty miles long, and fifty miles broad. The ranges of mountain peaks which Captain Bonneville speaks of, as rising from its bosom, are probably the summits of mountains beyond it, which may be visible at a vast distance, when viewed from an eminence, in the transparent atmosphere of these lofty regions. Several

large islands certainly exist in the lake ; one of which is said to be mountainous, but not by any means to the extent required to furnish the series of peaks above mentioned.

Captain Sublette, in one of his early expeditions across the mountains, is said to have sent four men in a skin canoe, to explore the lake, who professed to have navigated all round it, but to have suffered excessively from thirst, the water of the lake being extremely salt, and there being no fresh streams running into it.

Captain Bonneville doubts this report, or that the men accomplished the circumnavigation, because, he says, the lake receives several large streams from the mountains which bound it to the east. In the spring, when the streams are swollen by rain and by the melting of the snows, the lake rises several feet above its ordinary level ; during the summer, it gradually subsides again, leaving a sparkling zone of the finest salt upon its shores.

The elevation of the vast plateau on which this lake is situated is estimated by Captain Bonneville at one and three-fourths of a mile above the level of the ocean. The admirable purity and transparency of the atmosphere in this region, allowing objects to be seen, and the report of firearms to be heard, at an astonishing distance ; and its extreme dryness, causing the wheels of wagons to fall in pieces, as instanced in former passages of this work, are proofs of the great altitude of the Rocky Mountain plains. That a body of salt water should exist at such a height is cited as a singular phenomenon by Captain Bonneville, though the salt lake of Mexico is not much inferior in elevation*.

To have this lake properly explored, and all its secrets revealed, was the grand scheme of the Captain for the present year ; and while it was one in which his imagination evidently took a leading part, he believed it would be attended with great profit, from the numerous beaver streams with which the lake must be fringed.

This momentous undertaking he confided to his lieutenant, Mr. Walker, in whose experience and ability he had great confidence. He instructed him to keep along the shores of

* The lake of Tezcucó, which surrounds the city of Mexico, the largest and lowest of the five lakes on the Mexican plateau, and one of the most impregnated with saline particles, is seven thousand four hundred and sixty-eight feet, or nearly one mile and a half above the level of the sea.

the lake, and trap in all the streams on his route; also to keep a journal, and minutely to record the events of his journey, and everything curious or interesting, making maps or charts of his route, and of the surrounding country.

No pains nor expense were spared in fitting out the party, of forty men, which he was to command. They had complete supplies for a year, and were to meet Captain Bonneville in the ensuing summer, in the valley of Bear River, the largest tributary of the Salt Lake, which was to be his point of general rendezvous.

The next care of Captain Bonneville was to arrange for the safe transportation of the peltries which he had collected, to the Atlantic States. Mr. Robert Campbell, the partner of Sublette, was at this time in the rendezvous of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, having brought up their supplies. He was about to set off on his return, with the peltries collected during the year, and intended to proceed through the Crow country, to the head of navigation on the Bighorn River, and to descend in boats down that river, the Missouri, and the Yellowstone, to St. Louis.

Captain Bonneville determined to forward his peltries by the same route, under the especial care of Mr. Cerré. By way of escort, he would accompany Cerré to the point of embarkation, and then make an autumnal hunt in the Crow country.

CHAPTER XXII.

BEFORE we accompany Captain Bonneville into the Crow country, we will impart a few facts about this wild region, and the wild people who inhabit it. We are not aware of the precise boundaries, if there are any, of the country claimed by the Crows; it appears to extend from the Black Hills to the Rocky Mountains, including a part of their lofty ranges, and embracing many of the plains and valleys watered by the Wind River, the Yellowstone, the Powder River, the Little Missouri, and the Nebraska. The country varies in soil and climate; there are vast plains of sand and clay, studded with large red sand-hills; other parts are mountainous and picturesque; it possesses warm springs, and coal mines, and abounds with game.

But let us give the account of the country as rendered by Arapooish, a Crow chief, to Mr. Robert Campbell, of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

"The Crow country," said he, "is a good country. The Great Spirit has put it exactly in the right place; while you are in it you fare well; whenever you go out of it, whichever way you travel, you fare worse.

"If you go to the south, you have to wander over great barren plains; the water is warm and bad, and you meet the fever and ague.

"To the north it is cold; the winters are long and bitter, with no grass; you cannot keep horses there, but must travel with dogs. What is a country without horses?

"On the Columbia they are poor and dirty, paddle about in canoes, and eat fish. Their teeth are worn out; they are always taking fish-bones out of their mouths. Fish is poor food.

"To the east, they dwell in villages; they live well; but they drink the muddy water of the Missouri—that is bad. A Crow's dog would not drink such water.

"About the forks of the Missouri is a fine country; good water; good grass; plenty of buffalo. In summer, it is almost as good as the Crow country; but in winter it is cold; the grass is gone; and there is no salt weed for the horses.

"The Crow country is exactly in the right place. It has snowy mountains and sunny plains; all kinds of climates and good things for every season. When the summer heats scorch the prairies, you can draw up under the mountains, where the air is sweet and cool, the grass fresh, and the bright streams come tumbling out of the snow-banks. There you can hunt the elk, the deer, and the antelope, when their skins are fit for dressing; there you will find plenty of white bears and mountain sheep.

"In the autumn, when your horses are fat and strong from the mountain pastures, you can go down into the plains and hunt the buffalo, or trap beaver on the streams. And when winter comes on, you can take shelter in the woody bottoms along the rivers; there you will find buffalo meat for yourselves, and cotton-wood bark for your horses: or you may winter in the Wind River valley, where there is salt weed in abundance.

"The Crow country is exactly in the right place. Every-

thing good is to be found there. There is no country like the Crow country."

Such is the eulogium on his country by Arapooish.

We have had repeated occasions to speak of the restless and predatory habits of the Crows. They can muster fifteen hundred fighting men; but their incessant wars with the Blackfeet, and their vagabond, predatory habits, are gradually wearing them out.

In a recent work we related the circumstances of a white man named Rose, an outlaw, and a designing vagabond, who acted as guide and interpreter to Mr. Hunt and his party, on their journey across the mountains to Astoria, who came near betraying them into the hands of the Crows, and who remained among the tribe, marrying one of their women, and adopting their congenial habits*. A few anecdotes of the subsequent fortunes of that renegade may not be uninteresting, especially as they are connected with the fortunes of the tribe.

Rose was powerful in frame and fearless in spirit; and soon by his daring deeds took his rank among the first braves of the tribe. He aspired to command, and knew it was only to be attained by desperate exploits. He distinguished himself in repeated actions with the Blackfeet. On one occasion, a band of those savages had fortified themselves within a breastwork, and could not be harmed. Rose proposed to storm the work. "Who will take the lead?" was the demand. "I!" cried he; and putting himself at their head rushed forward. The first Blackfoot that opposed him he shot down with his rifle, and, snatching up the war-club of his victim, killed four others within the fort. The victory was complete, and Rose returned to the Crow village covered with glory, and bearing five Blackfoot scalps, to be erected as a trophy before his lodge. From this time, he was known among the Crows by the name of Che-ku-kaats, or "the man who killed five." He became chief of the village, or rather band, and for a time was the popular idol. His popularity soon awakened envy among the native braves; he was a stranger, an intruder, a white man. A party seceded from his command. Feuds and civil wars succeeded that lasted for two or three years, until Rose, having contrived to set his adopted brethren by the ears, left them, and went down the Missouri in 1823. Here he fell in with one of the earliest trapping expeditions sent by General Ashley across

* See Astoria.

the mountains. It was conducted by Smith, Fitzpatrick, and Sublette. Rose enlisted with them as guide and interpreter. When he got them among the Crows, he was exceedingly generous with their goods, making presents to the braves of his adopted tribe, as became a high-minded chief.

This, doubtless, helped to revive his popularity. In that expedition, Smith and Fitzpatrick were robbed of their horses in Green River valley; the place where the robbery took place still bears the name of Horse Creek. We are not informed whether the horses were stolen through the instigation and management of Rose; it is not improbable, for such was the perfidy he had intended to practise on a former occasion towards Mr. Hunt and his party.

The last anecdote we have of Rose is from an Indian trader. When General Atkinson made his military expedition up the Missouri, in 1825, to protect the fur trade, he held a conference with the Crow nation, at which Rose figured as Indian dignitary and Crow interpreter. The military were stationed at some little distance from the scene of the "big talk;" while the general and the chiefs were smoking pipes and making speeches, the officers, supposing all was friendly, left the troops and drew near the scene of ceremonial. Some of the more knowing Crows, perceiving this, stole quietly to the camp, and, unobserved, contrived to stop the touch-holes of the field-pieces with dirt. Shortly after, a misunderstanding occurred in the conference, some of the Indians, knowing the cannon to be useless, became insolent. A tumult arose. In the confusion, Colonel O'Fallan snapped a pistol in the face of a brave, and knocked him down with the butt end. The Crows were all in a fury. A chance-medley fight was on the point of taking place, when Rose, his natural sympathies as a white man suddenly recurring, broke the stock of his fusee over the head of a Crow warrior, and laid so vigorously about him with the barrel, that he soon put the whole throng to flight. Luckily, as no lives had been lost, this sturdy rib-roasting calmed the fury of the Crows, and the tumult ended without serious consequences.

What was the ultimate fate of this vagabond hero is not distinctly known. Some report him to have fallen a victim to disease, brought on by his licentious life; others assert that he was murdered in a feud among the Crows. After all, his residence among these savages, and the influence he acquired

over them, had, for a time, some beneficial effects. He is said, not merely to have rendered them more formidable to the Blackfeet, but to have opened their eyes to the policy of cultivating the friendship of the white men.

After Rose's death, his policy continued to be cultivated, with indifferent success, by Arapooish, the chief already mentioned, who had been his great friend, and whose character he had contributed to develop. This sagacious chief endeavoured, on every occasion, to restrain the predatory propensities of his tribe when directed against the white men. "If we keep friends with them," said he, "we have nothing to fear from the Blackfeet, and can rule the mountains." Arapooish pretended to be a great "medicine man;" a character among the Indians which is a compound of priest, doctor, prophet and conjurer. He carried about with him a tame eagle, as his "medicine" or familiar. With the white men he acknowledged that this was all charlatanism; but said it was necessary to give him weight and influence among his people.

Mr. Robert Campbell, from whom we have most of these facts, in the course of one of his trapping expeditions, was quartered in the village of Arapooish, and a guest in the lodge of the chieftain. He had collected a large quantity of furs, and, fearful of being plundered, deposited but a part in the lodge of the chief; the rest he buried in a cache. One night, Arapooish came into the lodge with a cloudy brow, and seated himself for a time without saying a word. At length, turning to Campbell, "You have more furs with you," said he, "than you have brought into my lodge?"

"I have," replied Campbell.

"Where are they?"

Campbell knew the uselessness of any prevarication with an Indian, and the importance of complete frankness. He described the exact place where he had concealed his peltries.

"'Tis well," replied Arapooish, "you speak straight. It is just as you say. But your cache has been robbed. Go and see how many skins have been taken from it."

Campbell examined the cache, and estimated his loss to be about one hundred and fifty beaver skins.

Arapooish now summoned a meeting of the village. He bitterly reproached his people for robbing a stranger who had confided to their honour; and commanded that whoever had taken the skins, should bring them back: declaring that, as

Campbell was his guest and inmate of his lodge, he would not eat nor drink until every skin was restored to him.

The meeting broke up, and every one dispersed. Arapooish now charged Campbell to give neither reward nor thanks to any one who should bring in the beaver skins, but to keep count as they were delivered.

In a little while, the skins began to make their appearance, a few at a time; they were laid down in the lodge, and those who brought them departed without saying a word. The day passed away. Arapooish sat in one corner of his lodge, wrapped up in his robe, scarcely moving a muscle of his countenance. When night arrived, he demanded if all the skins had been brought in. Above a hundred had been given up, and Campbell expressed himself contented. Not so the Crow chieftain. He fasted all that night, nor tasted a drop of water. In the morning, some more skins were brought in, and continued to come, one and two at a time, throughout the day; until but a few were wanting to make the number complete. Campbell was now anxious to put an end to this fasting of the old chief, and again declared that he was perfectly satisfied. Arapooish demanded what number of skins were yet wanting. On being told, he whispered to some of his people, who disappeared. After a time the number were brought in, though it was evident they were not any of the skins that had been stolen, but others gleaned in the village.

"Is all right now?" demanded Arapooish.

"All is right," replied Campbell.

"Good! Now bring me meat and drink!"

When they were alone together, Arapooish had a conversation with his guest.

"When you come another time among the Crows," said he, "don't hide your goods: trust to them and they will not wrong you. Put your goods in the lodge of a chief, and they are sacred; hide them in a cache, and any one who finds will steal them. My people have now given up your goods for my sake; but there are some foolish young men in the village, who may be disposed to be troublesome. Don't linger, therefore, but pack your horses and be off."

Campbell took his advice, and made his way safely out of the Crow country. He has ever since maintained, that the Crows are not so black as they are painted. "Trust to their

honour," says he, "and you are safe; trust to their honesty, and they will steal the hair off your head."

Having given these few preliminary particulars, we will resume the course of our narrative.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON the 25th of July, Captain Bonneville struck his tents, and set out on his route for the Bighorn, at the head of a party of fifty-six men, including those who were to embark with Cerré. Crossing the Green River valley, he proceeded along the south point of the Wind River range of mountains, and soon fell upon the track of Mr. Robert Campbell's party, which had preceded him by a day. This he pursued, until he perceived that it led down the banks of the Sweet Water to the south-east. As this was different from his proposed direction, he left it; and turning to the north-east, soon came upon the waters of the Popo Agie. This stream takes its rise in the Wind River Mountains. Its name, like most Indian names, is characteristic. *Popo*, in the Crow language, signifying head; and *Agie*, river. It is the head of a long river, extending from the south end of the Wind River Mountains in a north-east direction, until it falls into the Yellowstone. Its course is generally through plains, but is twice crossed by chains of mountains; the first called the Littlehorn; the second, the Bighorn. After it has forced its way through the first chain, it is called the Horn River; after the second chain, it is called the Bighorn River. Its passage through this last chain is rough and violent; making repeated falls, and rushing down long and furious rapids, which threaten destruction to the navigator; though a hardy trapper is said to have shot down them in a canoe. At the foot of these rapids is the head of navigation; where it was the intention of the parties to construct boats, and embark.

Proceeding down along the Popo Agie, Captain Bonneville came again in full view of the "Bluffs," as they are called, extending from the base of the Wind River Mountains far away to the east, and presenting to the eye a confusion of hills and cliffs of red sandstone, some peaked and angular, some round, some broken into crags and precipices, and piled up in fantastic masses; but all naked and sterile. There

appeared to be no soil favourable to vegetation, nothing but coarse gravel; yet over all this isolated, barren landscape, were diffused such atmospherical tints and hues, as to blend the whole into harmony and beauty.

In this neighbourhood, the captain made search for "the great Tar Spring," one of the wonders of the mountains; the medicinal properties of which, he had heard extravagantly lauded by the trappers. After a toilsome search, he found it at the foot of a sand-bluff, a little to the east of the Wind River Mountains; where it exuded in a small stream of the colour and consistency of tar. The men immediately hastened to collect a quantity of it, to use as an ointment for the galled backs of their horses, and as a balsam for their own pains and aches. From the description given of it, it is evidently the bituminous oil, called petroleum, or naphtha, which forms a principal ingredient in the potent medicine called British Oil. It is found in various parts of Europe and Asia, in several of the West India islands, and in some places of the United States. In the state of New York, it is called Seneca Oil, from being found near the Seneca lake.

The Crow country has other natural curiosities, which are held in superstitious awe by the Indians, and considered great marvels by the trappers. Such is the Burning Mountain, on Powder River, abounding with anthracite coal. Here the earth is hot and cracked; in many places emitting smoke and sulphurous vapours, as if covering concealed fires. A volcanic tract of similar character is found on Stinking River, one of the tributaries of the Bighorn, which takes its unhappy name from the odour derived from sulphureous springs and streams. This last-mentioned place was first discovered by Colter, a hunter belonging to Lewis and Clarke's exploring party, who came upon it in the course of his lonely wanderings, and gave such an account of its gloomy terrors, its hidden fires, smoking pits, noxious steams, and the all-pervading "smell of brimstone," that it received, and has ever since retained among trappers, the name of "Colter's Hell!"

Resuming his descent along the left bank of the Popo Agie, Captain Bonneville soon reached the plains; where he found several large streams entering from the west. Among these was Wind River, which gives its name to the mountains among which it takes its rise. This is one of the most important streams of the Crow country. The river being much

swollen, Captain Bonneville halted at its mouth, and sent out scouts to look for a fording place. While thus encamped, he beheld in the course of the afternoon, a long line of horsemen descending the slope of the hills on the opposite side of the Popo Agie. His first idea was, that they were Indians; he soon discovered, however, that they were white men, and, by the long line of pack-horses, ascertained them to be the convoy of Campbell, which, having descended the Sweet Water, was now on its way to the Horn River.

The two parties came together two or three days afterwards, on the 4th of August, after having passed through the gap of the Littlehorn Mountain. In company with Campbell's convoy was a trapping party of the Rocky Mountain Company, headed by Fitzpatrick; who, after Campbell's embarkation on the Bighorn, was to take charge of all the horses, and proceed on a trapping campaign. There were, moreover, two chance companions in the rival camp. One was Captain Stewart, of the British army, a gentleman of noble connections, who was amusing himself by a wandering tour in the Far West; in the course of which he had lived in hunter's style; accompanying various bands of traders, trappers, and Indians; and manifesting that relish for the wilderness that belongs to men of game spirit.

The other casual inmate of Mr. Campbell's camp was Mr. Nathaniel Wyeth; the selfsame leader of the band of New England salmon fishers, with whom we parted company in the valley of Pierre's Hole, after the battle with the Blackfeet. A few days after that affair, he again set out from the rendezvous in company with Milton Sublette and his brigade of trappers. On his march, he visited the battle ground, and penetrated to the deserted fort of the Blackfeet in the midst of the wood. It was a dismal scene. The fort was strewn with the mouldering bodies of the slain; while vultures soared aloft, or sat brooding on the trees around; and Indian dogs howled about the place, as if bewailing the death of their masters. Wyeth travelled for a considerable distance to the south-west, in company with Milton Sublette, when they separated; and the former, with eleven men, the remnant of his band, pushed on for Snake River; kept down the course of that eventful stream; traversed the Blue Mountains, trapping beaver occasionally by the way, and finally, after hardships of all kinds, arrived, on the 29th of October, at Vancouver, on

the Columbia, the main factory of the Hudson's Bay Company.

He experienced hospitable treatment at the hands of the agents of that company ; but his men, heartily tired of wandering in the wilderness, or tempted by other prospects, refused, for the most part, to continue any longer in his service. Some set off for the Sandwich Islands ; some entered into other employ. Wyeth found, too, that a great part of the goods he had brought with him were unfitted for the Indian trade ; in a word, his expedition, undertaken entirely on his own resources, proved a failure. He lost everything invested in it, but his hopes. These were as strong as ever. He took note of everything, therefore, that could be of service to him in the further prosecution of his project ; collected all the information within his reach, and then set off, accompanied by merely two men, on his return journey across the continent. He had got thus far " by hook and by crook," a mode in which a New England man can make his way all over the world, and through all kinds of difficulties, and was now bound for Boston ; in full confidence of being able to form a company for the salmon fishery and fur trade of the Columbia.

The party of Mr. Campbell had met with a disaster in the course of their route from the Sweet Water. Three or four of the men, who were reconnoitring the country in the advance of the main body, were visited one night in their camp, by fifteen or twenty Shoshonies. Considering this tribe as perfectly friendly, they received them in the most cordial and confiding manner. In the course of the night, the man on guard near the horses fell sound asleep ; upon which a Shoshonie shot him in the head, and nearly killed him. The savages then made off with the horses, leaving the rest of the party to find their way to the main body on foot.

The rival companies of Captain Bonneville and Mr. Campbell, thus fortuitously brought together, now prosecuted their journey in great good fellowship ; forming a joint camp of about a hundred men. The captain, however, began to entertain doubts that Fitzpatrick and his trappers, who kept profound silence as to their future movements, intended to hunt the same grounds which he had selected for his autumnal campaign, which lay to the west of the Horn River, on its tributary streams. In the course of his march, therefore, he secretly detached a small party of trappers, to make their way

to those hunting grounds, while he continued on with the main body ; appointing a rendezvous, at the next full moon, about the 28th of August, at a place called the Medicine Lodge.

On reaching the second chain, called the Bighorn Mountains, where the river forced its impetuous way through a precipitous defile, with cascades and rapids, the travellers were obliged to leave its banks, and traverse the mountains by a rugged and frightful route, emphatically called the "Bad Pass." Descending the opposite side, they again made for the river banks ; and about the middle of August, reached the point below the rapids, where the river becomes navigable for boats. Here Captain Bonneville detached a second party of trappers, consisting of ten men, to seek and join those whom he had detached while on the route ; appointing for them the same rendezvous, (at the Medicine Lodge,) on the 28th of August.

All hands now set to work to construct "bull-boats," as they are technically called ; a light, fragile kind of bark, characteristic of the expedients and inventions of the wilderness ; being formed of buffalo skins, stretched on frames. They are sometimes, also, called skin boats. Wyeth was the first ready ; and, with his usual promptness and hardihood, launched his frail bark, singly, on this wild and hazardous voyage, down an almost interminable succession of rivers, winding through countries teeming with savage hordes. Milton Sublette, his former fellow traveller, and his companion in the battle scenes of Pierre's Hole, took passage in his boat. His crew consisted of two white men, and two Indians. We shall hear further of Wyeth, and his wild voyage, in the course of our wanderings about the Far West.

The remaining parties soon completed their several armaments. That of Captain Bonneville was composed of three bull-boats, in which he embarked all his peltries, giving them in charge of Mr. Cerré, with a party of thirty-six men. Mr. Campbell took command of his own boats, and the little squadrons were soon gliding down the bright current of the Bighorn.

The secret precautions which Captain Bonneville had taken, to throw his men first into the trapping ground west of the Bighorn, were, probably, superfluous. It did not appear that Fitzpatrick had intended to hunt in that direction. The moment Mr. Campbell and his men embarked with the peltries,

Fitzpatrick took charge of all the horses, amounting to above a hundred, and struck off to the east, to trap upon Littlehorn, Powder, and Tongue Rivers. He was accompanied by Captain Stewart, who was desirous of having a range about the Crow country. Of the adventures they met with in that region of vagabonds and horse stealers, we shall have something to relate hereafter.

Captain Bonneville being now left to prosecute his trapping campaign without rivalry, set out, on the 17th of August, for the rendezvous at Medicine Lodge. He had four men remaining with him, and forty-six horses to take care of; with these he had to make his way over mountain and plain, through a marauding, horse-stealing region, full of peril for a numerous cavalcade so slightly manned. He addressed himself to his difficult journey, however, with his usual alacrity of spirit.

In the afternoon of his first day's journey, on drawing near to the Bighorn Mountain, on the summit of which he intended to encamp for the night, he observed, to his disquiet, a cloud of smoke rising from its base. He came to a halt, and watched it anxiously. It was very irregular; sometimes it would almost die away; and then would mount up in heavy volumes. There was, apparently, a large party encamped there; probably, some ruffian horde of Blackfeet. At any rate, it would not do for so small a number of men, with so numerous a cavalcade, to venture within sight of any wandering tribe. Captain Bonneville and his companions, therefore, avoided this dangerous neighbourhood; and, proceeding with extreme caution, reached the summit of the mountain, apparently without being discovered. Here they found a deserted Blackfoot fort, in which they ensconced themselves; disposed of everything as securely as possible, and passed the night without molestation. Early the next morning they descended the south side of the mountain into the great plain extending between it and the Littlehorn range. Here they soon came upon numerous footprints, and the carcasses of buffaloes; by which they knew there must be Indians not far off. Captain Bonneville now began to feel solicitude about the two small parties of trappers which he had detached; lest the Indians should have come upon them before they had united their forces. But he felt still more solicitude about his own party; for it was hardly to be expected he could traverse these naked plains undiscovered, when Indians were abroad; and should

he be discovered, his chance would be a desperate one. Everything now depended upon the greatest circumspection. It was dangerous to discharge a gun, or light a fire, or make the least noise, where such quick-eared and quick-sighted enemies were at hand. In the course of the day they saw indubitable signs that the buffalo had been roaming there in great numbers, and had recently been frightened away. That night they encamped with the greatest care; and threw up a strong breast-work for their protection.

For the two succeeding days they pressed forward rapidly, but cautiously, across the great plain; fording the tributary streams of the Horn River; encamping one night among thickets; the next, on an island; meeting, repeatedly, with traces of Indians; and now and then, in passing through a defile, experiencing alarms that induced them to cock their rifles.

On the last day of their march hunger got the better of their caution, and they shot a fine buffalo bull at the risk of being betrayed by the report. They did not halt to make a meal, but carried the meat on with them to the place of rendezvous, the Medicine Lodge, where they arrived safely, in the evening, and celebrated their arrival by a hearty supper.

The next morning they erected a strong pen for the horses, and a fortress of logs for themselves; and continued to observe the greatest caution. Their cooking was all done at mid-day, when the fire makes no glare, and a moderate smoke cannot be perceived at any great distance. In the morning and the evening, when the wind is lulled, the smoke rises perpendicularly in a blue column, or floats in light clouds above the tree-tops, and can be discovered from afar.

In this way the little party remained for several days, cautiously encamped, until, on the 29th of August, the two detachments they had been expecting, arrived together at the rendezvous. They, as usual, had their several tales of adventures to relate to the captain, which we will furnish to the reader in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE adventures of the detachment of ten are the first in order. These trappers, when they separated from Captain Bonneville

at the place where the furs were embarked, proceeded to the foot of the Bighorn Mountain, and having encamped, one of them mounted his mule and went out to set his trap in a neighbouring stream. He had not proceeded far when his steed came to a full stop. The trapper kicked and cudgelled, but to every blow and kick the mule snorted and kicked up, but still refused to budge an inch. The rider now cast his eyes warily around in search of some cause for this demur, when, to his dismay, he discovered an Indian fort within gunshot distance, lowering through the twilight. In a twinkling he wheeled about; his mule now seemed as eager to get on as himself, and in a few moments brought him, clattering with his traps, among his comrades. He was jeered at for his alacrity in retreating; his report was treated as a false alarm; his brother trappers contented themselves with reconnoitring the fort at a distance, and pronounced that it was deserted.

As night set in, the usual precaution, enjoined by Captain Bonneville on his men, was observed. The horses were brought in and tied, and a guard stationed over them. This done, the men wrapped themselves in their blankets, stretched themselves before the fire, and being fatigued with a long day's march, and gorged with a hearty supper, were soon in a profound sleep.

The camp fires gradually died away; all was dark and silent; the sentinel stationed to watch the horses had marched as far, and supped as heartily as any of his companions, and while they snored, he began to nod at his post. After a time, a low trampling noise reached his ear. He half opened his closing eyes, and beheld two or three elks moving about the lodges, picking, and smelling, and grazing here and there. The sight of the elk within the purlieus of the camp caused some little surprise; but, having had his supper, he cared not for elk meat, and, suffering them to graze about unmolested, soon relapsed into a doze.

Suddenly, before daybreak, a discharge of firearms, and a struggle and tramp of horses, made every one start to his feet. The first move was to secure the horses. Some were gone; others were struggling, and kicking, and trembling, for there was a horrible uproar of whoops, and yells, and firearms. Several trappers stole quietly from the camp, and succeeded in driving in the horses which had broken away; the rest were tethered still more strongly. A breastwork was thrown

up of saddles, baggage, and camp furniture, and all hands waited anxiously for daylight. The Indians, in the meantime, collected on a neighbouring height, kept up the most horrible clamour, in hopes of striking a panic into the camp, or frightening off the horses. When the day dawned, the trappers attacked them briskly and drove them to some distance. A desultory firing was kept up for an hour, when the Indians, seeing nothing was to be gained, gave up the contest and retired. They proved to be a war party of Blackfeet, who, while in search of the Crow tribe, had fallen upon the trail of Captain Bonneville on the Popo Agie, and dogged him to the Bighorn; but had been completely baffled by his vigilance. They had then waylaid the present detachment, and were actually housed in perfect silence within their fort, when the mule of the trapper made such a dead point.

The savages went off uttering the wildest denunciations of hostility, mingled opprobrious terms in broken English, and gesticulations of the most insulting kind.

In this *melée*, one white man was wounded, and two horses were killed. On preparing the morning's meal, however, a number of cups, knives, and other articles were missing, which had, doubtless, been carried off by the fictitious elk, during the slumber of the very sagacious sentinel.

As the Indians had gone off in the direction which the trappers had intended to travel, the latter changed their route, and pushed forward rapidly through the "Bad Pass," nor halted until night; when, supposing themselves out of the reach of the enemy, they contented themselves with tying up their horses and posting a guard. They had scarce laid down to sleep, when a dog strayed into the camp with a small pack of moccasins tied upon his back; for dogs are made to carry burdens among the Indians. The sentinel, more knowing than he of the preceding night, awoke his companions and reported the circumstance. It was evident that Indians were at hand. All were instantly at work; a strong pen was soon constructed for the horses, after completing which, they resumed their slumbers with the composure of men long inured to dangers.

In the next night, the prowling of dogs about the camp, and various suspicious noises, showed that Indians were still hovering about them. Hurrying on by long marches, they at length fell upon a trail, which, with the experienced eye of

veteran woodmen, they soon discovered to be that of the party of trappers detached by Captain Bonneville when on his march, and which they were sent to join. They likewise ascertained from various signs that this party had suffered some maltreatment from the Indians. They now pursued the trail with intense anxiety; it carried them to the banks of the stream called the Gray Bull, and down along its course, until they came to where it empties into the Horn River. Here, to their great joy, they discovered the comrades of whom they were in search, all strongly fortified, and in a state of great watchfulness and anxiety.

We now take up the adventures of the first detachment of trappers. These men, after parting with the main body under Captain Bonneville, had proceeded slowly for several days up the course of the river, trapping beaver as they went. One morning, as they were about to visit their traps, one of the camp-keepers pointed to a fine elk, grazing at a distance, and requested them to shoot it. Three of the trappers started off for the purpose. In passing a thicket, they were fired upon by some savages in ambush, and at the same time, the pretended elk, throwing off his hide and his horn, started forth an Indian warrior.

One of the three trappers had been brought down by the volley; the others fled to the camp, and all hands, seizing up whatever they could carry off, retreated to a small island in the river, and took refuge among the willows. Here they were soon joined by their comrade who had fallen, but who had merely been wounded in the neck.

In the meantime, the Indians took possession of the deserted camp, with all the traps, accoutrements, and horses. While they were busy among the spoils, a solitary trapper, who had been absent at his work, came sauntering to the camp with his traps on his back. He had approached near by, when an Indian came forward and motioned him to keep away; at the same moment, he was perceived by his comrades on the island, and warned of his danger with loud cries. The poor fellow stood for a moment, bewildered and aghast, then dropping his traps, wheeled and made off at full speed, quickened by a sportive volley which the Indians rattled after him.

In high good humour with their easy triumph, the savages now formed a circle round the fire and performed a war

dance, with the unlucky trappers for rueful spectators. This done, emboldened by what they considered cowardice on the part of the white men, they neglected their usual mode of bush-fighting, and advanced openly within twenty paces of the willows. A sharp volley from the trappers brought them to a sudden halt, and laid three of them breathless. The chief, who had stationed himself on an eminence to direct all the movements of his people, seeing three of his warriors laid low, ordered the rest to retire. They immediately did so, and the whole band soon disappeared behind a point of woods, carrying off with them the horses, traps, and the greater part of the baggage.

It was just after this misfortune, that the party of ten men discovered this forlorn band of trappers in a fortress, which they had thrown up after their disaster. They were so perfectly dismayed, that they could not be induced even to go in quest of their traps, which they had set in a neighbouring stream. The two parties now joined their forces, and made their way, without further misfortune, to the rendezvous.

Captain Bonneville perceived from the reports of these parties, as well as from what he had observed himself in his recent march, that he was in a neighbourhood teeming with danger. Two wandering Snake Indians also, who visited the camp, assured him that there were two large bands of Crows marching rapidly upon him. He broke up his encampment, therefore, on the 1st of September, made his way to the south, across the Littlehorn Mountain, until he reached Wind River, and then turning westward, moved slowly up the banks of that stream, giving time for his men to trap as he proceeded. As it was not in the plan of the present hunting campaign to go near the caches on Green River, and as the trappers were in want of traps to replace those they had lost, Captain Bonneville undertook to visit the caches and procure a supply. To accompany him in this hazardous expedition, which would take him through the defiles of the Wind River Mountains, and up the Green River valley, he took but three men; the main party were to continue on trapping up towards the head of Wind River, near which he was to rejoin them, just about the place where that stream issues from the mountains. We shall accompany the captain on his adventurous errand.

CHAPTER XXV.

HAVING forded Wind River a little above its mouth, Captain Bonneville and his three companions proceeded across a gravelly plain, until they fell upon the Popo Agie, up the left bank of which they held their course, nearly in a southerly direction. Here they came upon numerous droves of buffalo, and halted for the purpose of procuring a supply of beef. As the hunters were stealing cautiously to get within shot of the game, two small white bears suddenly presented themselves in their path, and rising upon their hind legs, contemplated them for some time with a whimsically solemn gaze. The hunters remained motionless; whereupon the bears, having apparently satisfied their curiosity, lowered themselves upon all fours, and began to withdraw. The hunters now advanced, upon which the bears turned, rose again upon their haunches, and repeated their serio-comic examination. This was repeated several times, until the hunters, piqued at their unmannerly staring, rebuked it with a discharge of their rifles. The bears made an awkward bound or two, as if wounded, and then walked off with great gravity, seeming to commune together, and every now and then turning to take another look at the hunters. It was well for the latter that the bears were but half grown, and had not yet acquired the ferocity of their kind.

The buffalo were somewhat startled at the report of the firearms; but the hunters succeeded in killing a couple of fine cows, and having secured the best of the meat, continued forward until some time after dark, when, encamping in a large thicket of willows, they made a great fire, roasted buffalo beef enough for half a score, disposed of the whole of it with keen relish and high glee, and then "turned in" for the night and slept soundly, like weary and well-fed hunters.

At daylight they were in the saddle again, and skirted along the river, passing through fresh grassy meadows, and a succession of beautiful groves of willows and cotton-wood. Towards evening, Captain Bonneville observed a smoke at a distance rising from among hills, directly in the route he was pursuing. Apprehensive of some hostile band, he concealed the horses in a thicket, and, accompanied by one of his men,

crawled cautiously up a height, from which he could overlook the scene of danger. Here, with a spy glass, he reconnoitred the surrounding country, but not a lodge nor fire, not a man, horse, nor dog, was to be discovered; in short, the smoke which had caused such an alarm proved to be the vapour from several warm, or rather hot springs of considerable magnitude, pouring forth streams in every direction, over a bottom of white clay. One of the springs was about twenty-five yards in diameter, and so deep, that the water was of a bright green colour.

They were now advancing diagonally upon the chain of Wind River Mountains, which lay between them and Green River valley. To coast round their southern points would be a wide circuit; whereas, could they force their way through them, they might proceed in a straight line. The mountains were lofty, with snowy peaks and cragged sides; it was hoped, however, that some practicable defile might be found. They attempted, accordingly, to penetrate the mountains by following up one of the branches of the Popo Agie, but soon found themselves in the midst of stupendous crags and precipices, that barred all progress. Retracing their steps, and falling back upon the river, they consulted where to make another attempt. They were too close beneath the mountains to scan them generally, but they now recollected having noticed, from the plain, a beautiful slope, rising, at an angle of about thirty degrees, and apparently without any break, until it reached the snowy region. Seeking this gentle acclivity, they began to ascend it with alacrity, trusting to find at the top one of those elevated plains which prevail among the Rocky Mountains. The slope was covered with coarse gravel, interspersed with plates of freestone. They attained the summit with some toil, but found, instead of a level, or rather undulating plain, that they were on the brink of a deep and precipitous ravine, from the bottom of which rose a second slope, similar to the one they had just ascended. Down into this profound ravine they made their way by a rugged path, or rather fissure of the rocks, and then laboured up the second slope. They gained the summit only to find themselves on another ravine, and now perceived that this vast mountain, which had presented such a sloping and even side to the distant beholder on the plain, was shagged by frightful precipices, and seamed with longitudinal chasms, deep and dangerous.

In one of these wild dells they passed the night, and slept soundly and sweetly after their fatigues. Two days more of arduous climbing and scrambling only served to admit them into the heart of this mountainous and awful solitude; where difficulties increased as they proceeded. Sometimes they scrambled from rock to rock, up the bed of some mountain stream, dashing its bright way down to the plains; sometimes they availed themselves of the paths made by the deer and the mountain sheep, which, however, often took them to the brink of fearful precipices, or led to rugged defiles, impassable for their horses. At one place they were obliged to slide their horses down the face of a rock, in which attempt some of the poor animals lost their footing, rolled to the bottom, and came near being dashed to pieces.

In the afternoon of the second day the travellers attained one of the elevated valleys locked up in this singular bed of mountains. Here were two bright and beautiful little lakes, set like mirrors in the midst of stern and rocky heights, and surrounded by grassy meadows, inexpressibly refreshing to the eye. These probably were among the sources of those mighty streams which take their rise among these mountains, and wander hundreds of miles through the plains.

In the green pastures bordering upon these lakes, the travellers halted to repose, and to give their weary horses time to crop the sweet and tender herbage. They had now ascended to a great height above the level of the plains, yet they beheld huge crags of granite piled one upon another, and beetling like battlements far above them. While two of the men remained in the camp with the horses, Captain Bonneville, accompanied by the other man, set out to climb a neighbouring height, hoping to gain a commanding prospect, and discern some practicable route through this stupendous labyrinth. After much toil he reached the summit of a lofty cliff, but it was only to behold gigantic peaks rising all around, and towering far into the snowy regions of the atmosphere. Selecting one which appeared to be the highest, he crossed a narrow intervening valley, and began to scale it. He soon found that he had undertaken a tremendous task; but the pride of man is never more obstinate than when climbing mountains. The ascent was so steep and rugged, that he and his companion were frequently obliged to clamber on hands and knees, with their guns slung upon their backs. Frequently, exhausted with fatigue, and drip-

ping with perspiration, they threw themselves upon the snow, and took handfuls of it to allay their parching thirst: At one place they even stripped off their coats, and hung them upon the bushes, and thus lightly clad, proceeded to scramble over these eternal snows. As they ascended still higher, there were cool breezes that refreshed and braced them, and springing with new ardour to their task, they at length attained the summit.

Here a scene burst upon the view of Captain Bonneville, that for a time astonished and overwhelmed him with its immensity. He stood, in fact, upon that dividing ridge which Indians regard as the crest of the world; and on each side of which, the landscape may be said to decline to the two cardinal oceans of the globe. Whichever way he turned his eye, it was confounded by the vastness and variety of objects. Beneath him, the Rocky Mountains seemed to open all their secret recesses: deep solemn valleys; treasured lakes; dreary passes; rugged defiles, and foaming torrents; while beyond their savage precincts, the eye was lost in an almost immeasurable landscape; stretching on every side into dim and hazy distance, like the expanse of a summer's sea. Whichever way he looked, he beheld vast plains glimmering with reflected sunshine; mighty streams wandering on their shining course toward either ocean, and snowy mountains, chain beyond chain, and peak beyond peak, till they melted like clouds into the horizon. For a time, the Indian fable seemed realized: he had attained that height from which the Black-foot warrior, after death, first catches a view of the land of souls, and beholds the happy hunting grounds spread out below him, brightening with the abodes of the free and generous spirits. The captain stood for a long while gazing upon this scene, lost in a crowd of vague and indefinite ideas and sensations. A long-drawn inspiration at length relieved him from this enthrallment of the mind, and he began to analyze the parts of this vast panorama. A simple enumeration of a few of its features, may give some idea of its collective grandeur and magnificence.

The peak on which the captain had taken his stand, commanded the whole Wind River chain; which, in fact, may rather be considered one immense mountain, broken into snowy peaks and lateral spurs, and seamed with narrow valleys. Some of these valleys glittered with silver lakes and

gushing streams ; the fountain heads, as it were, of the mighty tributaries to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Beyond the snowy peaks, to the south, and far, far below the mountain range, the gentle river, called the Sweet Water, was seen pursuing its tranquil way through the rugged regions of the Black Hills. In the east, the head waters of Wind River wandered through a plain, until, mingling in one powerful current, they forced their way through the range of Horn Mountains, and were lost to view. To the north, were caught glimpses of the upper streams of the Yellow-stone, that great tributary of the Missouri. In another direction were to be seen some of the sources of the Oregon, or Columbia, flowing to the north-west, past those towering landmarks the Three Tetons, and pouring down into the great lava plain ; while, almost at the captain's feet, the Green River, or Colorado of the West, set forth on its wandering pilgrimage to the Gulf of California ; at first a mere mountain torrent, dashing northward, over crag and precipice, in a succession of cascades, and tumbling into the plain, where, expanding into an ample river, it circled away to the south, and after alternately shining out and disappearing in the mazes of the vast landscape, was finally lost in a horizon of mountains. The day was calm and cloudless, and the atmosphere so pure that objects were discernible at an astonishing distance. The whole of this immense area was inclosed by an outer range of shadowy peaks, some of them faintly marked on the horizon, which seemed to wall it in from the rest of the earth.

It is to be regretted that Captain Bonneville had no instruments with him with which to ascertain the altitude of this peak. He gives it as his opinion that it is the loftiest point of the North American continent ; but of this we have no satisfactory proof. It is certain that the Rocky Mountains are of an altitude vastly superior to what was formerly supposed. We rather incline to the opinion that the highest peak is further to the northward, and is the same measured by Mr. Thompson, surveyor to the Northwest Company ; who, by the joint means of the barometer and trigonometric measurement, ascertained it to be twenty-five thousand feet above the level of the sea ; an elevation only inferior to that of the Himalayas*.

For a long time, Captain Bonneville remained gazing

* See the letter of Professor Renwick, in the Appendix to Astoria.

around him with wonder and enthusiasm ; at length the chill and wintry winds, whirling about the snow-clad height, admonished him to descend. He soon regained the spot where he and his companion had thrown off their coats, which were now gladly resumed, and, retracing their course down the peak, they safely rejoined their companions on the border of the lake.

Notwithstanding the savage and almost inaccessible nature of these mountains, they have their inhabitants. As one of the party was out hunting, he came upon the solitary track of a man in a lonely valley. Following it up, he reached the brow of a cliff, whence he beheld three savages running across the valley below him. He fired his gun to call their attention, hoping to induce them to turn back. They only fled the faster, and disappeared among the rocks. The hunter returned and reported what he had seen. Captain Bonneville at once concluded that these belonged to a kind of hermit race, scanty in number, that inhabit the highest and most inaccessible fastnesses. They speak the Shoshonie language, and probably are offsets from that tribe, though they have peculiarities of their own, which distinguish them from all other Indians. They are miserably poor; own no horses, and are destitute of every convenience to be derived from an intercourse with the whites. Their weapons are bows and stone-pointed arrows, with which they hunt the deer, the elk, and the mountain sheep. They are to be found scattered about the countries of the Shoshonie, Flathead, Crow, and Black-foot tribes ; but their residences are always in lonely places, and the clefts of the rocks.

Their footsteps are often seen by the trappers in the high and solitary valleys among the mountains, and the smokes of their fires descried among the precipices, but they themselves are rarely met with, and still more rarely brought to a parley, so great is their shyness, and their dread of strangers.

As their poverty offers no temptation to the marauder, and as they are inoffensive in their habits, they are never the objects of warfare : should one of them, however, fall into the hands of a war party, he is sure to be made a sacrifice, for the sake of that savage trophy, a scalp, and that barbarous ceremony, a scalp dance. These forlorn beings, forming a mere link between human nature and the brute, have been looked down upon with pity and contempt by the creole trappers,

who have given them the appellation of "les dignes de pitié," or "the objects of pity." They appear more worthy to be called the wild men of the mountains.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE view from the snowy peak of the Wind River Mountain, while it had excited Captain Bonneville's enthusiasm, had satisfied him that it would be useless to force a passage westward, through multiplying barriers of cliffs and precipices. Turning his face eastward, therefore, he endeavoured to regain the plains, intending to make the circuit round the southern point of the mountain. To descend, and to extricate himself from the heart of this rock-piled wilderness, was almost as difficult as to penetrate it. Taking his course down the ravine of a tumbling stream, the commencement of some future river, he descended from rock to rock, and shelf to shelf, between stupendous cliffs and beetling crags, that sprang up to the sky. Often he had to cross and recross the rushing torrent, as it wound foaming and roaring down its broken channel, or was walled by perpendicular precipices; and imminent was the hazard of breaking the legs of the horses in the clefts and fissures of slippery rocks. The whole scenery of this deep ravine was of Alpine wildness and sublimity. Sometimes the travellers passed beneath the cascades, which pitched from such lofty heights, that the water fell into the stream like heavy rain. In other places, torrents came tumbling from crag to crag, dashing into foam and spray, and making tremendous din and uproar.

On the second day of their descent, the travellers, having got beyond the steepest pitch of the mountains, came to where the deep and rugged ravine began occasionally to expand into small levels or valleys, and the stream to assume for short intervals a more peaceful character. Here, not merely the river itself, but every rivulet flowing into it, was dammed up by communities of industrious beavers, so as to inundate the neighbourhood and make continual swamps.

During a mid-day halt in one of these beaver valleys, Captain Bonneville left his companions, and strolled down the course of the stream to reconnoitre. He had not proceeded far, when he came to a beaver pond, and caught a glimpse of

one of its painstaking inhabitants busily at work upon the dam. The curiosity of the captain was aroused, to behold the mode of operating of this far-famed architect; he moved forward, therefore, with the utmost caution, parting the branches of the water willows without making any noise, until having attained a position commanding a view of the whole pond, he stretched himself flat on the ground, and watched the solitary workman. In a little while, three others appeared at the head of the dam, bringing sticks and bushes. With these they proceeded directly to the barrier, which Captain Bonneville perceived was in need of repair. Having deposited their loads upon the broken part, they dived into the water, and shortly reappeared at the surface. Each now brought a quantity of mud, with which he would plaster the sticks and bushes just deposited. This kind of masonry was continued for some time, repeated supplies of wood and mud being brought, and treated in the same manner. This done, the industrious beavers indulged in a little recreation, chasing each other about the pond, dodging and whisking about on the surface, or diving to the bottom; and in their frolic, often slapping their tails on the water with a loud clacking sound. While they were thus amusing themselves, another of the fraternity made his appearance, and looked gravely on the sports for some time, without offering to join in them. He then climbed the bank close to where the captain was concealed, and rearing himself on his hind quarters, in a sitting position, put his fore paws against a young pine tree, and began to cut the bark with his teeth. At times he would tear off a small piece, and holding it between his paws, and retaining his sedentary position, would feed himself with it, after the fashion of a monkey. The object of the beaver, however, was evidently to cut down the tree; and he was proceeding with his work, when he was alarmed by the approach of Captain Bonneville's men, who, feeling anxious at the protracted absence of their leader, were coming in search of him. At the sound of their voices, all the beavers, busy as well as idle, dived at once beneath the surface, and were no more to be seen. Captain Bonneville regretted this interruption. He had heard much of the sagacity of the beaver in cutting down trees, in which, it is said, they manage to make them fall into the water, and in such a position and direction as may be most favourable for conveyance to the desired point. In the present instance, the

tree was a tall straight pine, and as it grew perpendicularly, and there was not a breath of air stirring, the beaver could have felled it in any direction he pleased, if really capable of exercising a discretion in the matter. He was evidently engaged in "belting" the tree, and his first incision had been on the side nearest to the water.

Captain Bonneville, however, discredits, on the whole, the alleged sagacity of the beaver in this particular, and thinks the animal has no other aim than to get the tree down, without any of the subtle calculation as to its mode or direction of falling. This attribute, he thinks, has been ascribed to them from the circumstance, that most trees growing near water-courses, either lean bodily towards the stream, or stretch their largest limbs in that direction, to benefit by the space, the light, and the air to be found there. The beaver, of course, attacks those trees which are nearest at hand, and on the banks of the stream or pond. He makes incisions round them, or, in technical phrase, belts them with his teeth, and when they fall, they naturally take the direction in which their trunks or branches preponderate.

"I have often," says Captain Bonneville, "seen trees measuring eighteen inches in diameter, at the places where they had been cut through by the beaver, but they lay in all directions, and often very inconveniently for the after purposes of the animal. In fact, so little ingenuity do they at times display in this particular, that at one of our camps on Snake River, a beaver was found with his head wedged into the cut which he had made, the tree having fallen upon him and held him prisoner until he died."

Great choice, according to the captain, is certainly displayed by the beaver in selecting the wood which is to furnish bark for winter provision. The whole beaver household, old and young, set out upon this business, and will often make long journeys before they are suited. Sometimes they cut down trees of the largest size, and then cull the branches, the bark of which is most to their taste. These they cut into lengths of about three feet, convey them to the water, and float them to their lodges, where they are stored away for winter. They are studious of cleanliness and comfort in their lodges, and after their repasts, will carry out the sticks from which they have eaten the bark, and throw them into the current beyond the barrier. They are jealous, too, of their territories, and

extremely pugnacious, never permitting a strange beaver to enter their premises, and often fighting with such virulence as almost to tear each other to pieces. In the spring, which is the breeding season, the male leaves the female at home, and sets off on a tour of pleasure, rambling often to a great distance, recreating himself in every clear and quiet expanse of water on his way, and climbing the banks occasionally to feast upon the tender sprouts of the young willows. As summer advances, he gives up his bachelor rambles, and, bethinking himself of housekeeping duties, returns home to his mate and his new progeny, and marshals them all for the foraging expedition in quest of winter provisions.

After having shown the public spirit of this praiseworthy little animal as a member of a community, and his amiable and exemplary conduct as the father of a family, we grieve to record the perils with which he is environed, and the snares set for him and his painstaking household.

Practice, says Captain Bonneville, has given such a quickness of eye to the experienced trapper in all that relates to his pursuit, that he can detect the slightest sign of beaver, however wild; and although the lodge may be concealed by close thickets and overhanging willows, he can generally, at a single glance, make an accurate guess at the number of its inmates. He now goes to work to set his trap; planting it upon the shore, in some chosen place, two or three inches below the surface of the water, and secures it by a chain to a pole set deep in the mud. A small twig is then stripped of its bark, and one end is dipped in the "medicine," as the trappers term the peculiar bait which they employ. This end of the stick rises about four inches above the surface of the water, the other end is planted between the jaws of the trap. The beaver, possessing an acute sense of smell, is soon attracted by the odour of the bait. As he raises his nose towards it, his foot is caught in the trap. In this fright he throws a somerset into the deep water. The trap, being fastened to the pole, resists all his efforts to drag it to the shore; the chain by which it is fastened defies his teeth; he struggles for a time, and at length sinks to the bottom and is drowned.

Upon rocky bottoms, where it is not possible to plant the pole, it is thrown into the stream. The beaver, when entrapped, often gets fastened by the chain to sunken logs or

floating timber; if he gets to shore, he is entangled in the thickets of brook willows. In such cases, however, it costs the trapper diligent search, and sometimes a bout at swimming, before he finds his game.

Occasionally it happens that several members of a beaver family are trapped in succession. The survivors then become extremely shy, and can scarcely be "brought to medicine," to use the trapper's phrase for "taking the bait." In such case the trapper gives up the use of the bait, and conceals his traps in the usual paths and crossing-places of the household. The beaver now being completely "up to trap," approaches them cautiously, and springs them ingeniously with a stick. At other times, he turns the traps bottom upwards, by the same means, and occasionally even drags them to the barrier and conceals them in the mud. The trapper now gives up the contest of ingenuity, and shouldering his traps, marches off, admitting that he is not yet "up to beaver."

On the day following Captain Bonneville's supervision of the industrious and frolicsome community of beavers, of which he has given so edifying an account, he succeeded in extricating himself from the Wind River Mountains, and regaining the plain to the eastward, made a great bend to the south, so as to go round the bases of the mountains, and arrived without further incident of importance, at the old place of rendezvous in Green River valley, on the 17th of September.

He found the caches, in which he had deposited his superfluous goods and equipments, all safe, and having opened and taken from them the necessary supplies, he closed them again, taking care to obliterate all traces that might betray them to the keen eyes of Indian marauders.

CHAPTER XXVII.

On the 18th of September, Captain Bonneville and his three companions set out, bright and early, to rejoin the main party from which they had parted on Wind River. Their route lay up the Green River valley, with that stream on their right hand, and beyond it, the range of Wind River Mountains.

At the head of the valley, they were to pass through a defile which would bring them out beyond the northern end of these mountains, to the head of Wind River, where they expected to meet the main party, according to arrangement.

We have already adverted to the dangerous nature of this neighbourhood, infested by roving bands of Crows and Blackfeet, to whom the numerous defiles and passes of the country afford capital places for ambush and surprise. The travellers, therefore, kept a vigilant eye upon everything that might give intimation of lurking danger.

About two hours after mid-day, as they reached the summit of a hill, they discovered buffalo on the plain below, running in every direction. One of the men, too, fancied he heard the report of a gun. It was concluded, therefore, that there was some party of Indians below, hunting the buffalo.

The horses were immediately concealed in a narrow ravine, and the captain, mounting an eminence, but concealing himself from view, reconnoitred the whole neighbourhood with a telescope. Not an Indian was to be seen, so, after halting about an hour, he resumed his journey. Convinced, however, that he was in a dangerous neighbourhood, he advanced with the utmost caution; winding his way through hollows and ravines, and avoiding, as much as possible, any open tract, or rising ground, that might betray his little party to the watchful eye of an Indian scout.

Arriving, at length, at the edge of the open meadow-land bordering on the river, he again observed the buffalo, as far as he could see, scampering in great alarm. Once more concealing the horses, he and his companions remained for a long time watching the various groups of the animals, as each caught the panic and started off; but they sought in vain to discover the cause.

They were now about to enter the mountain defile, at the head of Green River valley, where they might be waylaid and attacked; they, therefore, arranged the packs on their horses, in the manner most secure and convenient for sudden flight, should such be necessary. This done, they again set forward, keeping the most anxious look-out in every direction.

It was now drawing towards evening; but they could not think of encamping for the night, in a place so full of danger. Captain Bonneville, therefore, determined to halt about sunset, kindle a fire, as if for encampment, cook and eat supper;

but, as soon as it was sufficiently dark, to make a rapid move for the summit of the mountain, and seek some secluded spot for their night's lodgings.

Accordingly, as the sun went down, the little party came to a halt, made a large fire, spitted their buffalo meat on wooden sticks, and, when sufficiently roasted, planted the savory viands before them; cutting off huge slices with their hunting knives, and supping with a hunter's appetite. The light of their fire would not fail, as they knew, to attract the attention of an Indian horde in the neighbourhood; but they trusted to be off and away, before any prowlers could reach the place. While they were supping thus hastily, however, one of their party suddenly started up, and shouted "Indians." All were instantly on their feet, with their rifles in their hands; but could see no enemy. The man, however, declared that he had seen an Indian advancing, cautiously, along the trail which they had made in coming to the encampment, who, the moment he was perceived, had thrown himself on the ground, and disappeared. He urged Captain Bonneville instantly to decamp. The captain, however, took the matter more coolly. The single fact, that the Indian had endeavoured to hide himself, convinced him that he was not one of a party, on the advance to make an attack. He was, probably, some scout, who had followed up their trail, until he came in sight of their fire. He would, in such case, return, and report what he had seen to his companions. These, supposing the white men had encamped for the night, would keep aloof until very late, when all should be asleep. They would, then, according to Indian tactics, make their stealthy approaches, and place themselves in ambush around, preparatory to their attack, at the usual hour of daylight.

Such was Captain Bonneville's conclusion; in consequence of which, he counselled his men to keep perfectly quiet, and act as if free from all alarm, until the proper time arrived for a move. They accordingly, continued their repast with pretended appetite and jollity; and then trimmed and replenished their fire, as if for a bivouac. As soon, however, as the night had completely set in, they left their fire blazing, walked quietly among the willows, and then leaping into their saddles, made off as noiselessly as possible. In proportion as they left the point of danger behind them, they relaxed in their rigid and anxious taciturnity, and began to joke at the

expense of their enemy, whom they pictured to themselves mousing in the neighbourhood of their deserted fire, waiting for the proper time of attack, and preparing for a grand disappointment.

About midnight, feeling satisfied that they had gained a secure distance, they posted one of their number to keep watch, in case the enemy should follow on their trail, and then, turning abruptly into a dense and matted thicket of willows, halted for the night at the foot of the mountain, instead of making for the summit, as they had originally intended.

A trapper in the wilderness, like a sailor on the ocean, snatches morsels of enjoyment in the midst of trouble, and sleeps soundly when surrounded by danger. The little party now made their arrangements for sleep with perfect calmness; they did not venture to make a fire and cook, it is true, though generally done by hunters whenever they come to a halt, and have provisions. They comforted themselves, however, by smoking a tranquil pipe; and then calling in the watch, and turning loose the horses, stretched themselves on their pallets, agreed that whoever should first awake, should rouse the rest; and in a little while were all in as sound sleep as though in the midst of a fortress.

A little before day, they were all on the alert; it was the hour for Indian maraud. A sentinel was immediately detached, to post himself at a little distance on their trail, and give the alarm, should he see or hear an enemy.

With the first blink of dawn, the rest sought the horses; brought them to the camp, and tied them up, until an hour after sunrise; when, the sentinel having reported that all was well, they sprang once more into their saddles, and pursued the most covert and secret paths up the mountain, avoiding the direct route.

At noon, they halted and made a hasty repast; and then bent their course so as to regain the route from which they had diverged. They were now made sensible of the danger from which they had just escaped. There were tracks of Indians who had evidently been in pursuit of them; but had recently returned, baffled in their search.

Trusting that they had now got a fair start, and could not be overtaken before night, even in case the Indians should renew the chase, they pushed briskly forward, and did not

encamp until late ; when they cautiously concealed themselves in a secure nook of the mountains.

Without any further alarm, they made their way to the head waters of Wind River, and reached the neighbourhood in which they had appointed the rendezvous with their companions. It was within the precincts of the Crow country ; the Wind River valley being one of the favourite haunts of that restless tribe. After much searching, Captain Bonneville came upon a trail which had evidently been made by his main party. It was so old, however, that he feared his people might have left the neighbourhood ; driven off, perhaps, by some of those war parties which were on the prowl. He continued his search with great anxiety, and no little fatigue ; for his horses were jaded, and almost crippled, by their forced marches and scramblings through rocky defiles.

On the following day, about noon, Captain Bonneville came upon a deserted camp of his people, from which they had, evidently, turned back ; but he could find no signs to indicate why they had done so ; whether they had met with misfortune, or molestation, or in what direction they had gone. He was now, more than ever, perplexed.

On the following day, he resumed his march with increasing anxiety. The feet of his horses had by this time become so worn and wounded by the rocks, that he had to make moccasins for them of buffalo hide. About noon, he came to another deserted camp of his men ; but soon after lost their trail. After great search, he once more found it, turning in a southerly direction along the eastern bases of the Wind River Mountains, which towered to the right. He now pushed forward with all possible speed, in hopes of overtaking the party. At night, he slept at another of their camps, from which they had but recently departed. When the day dawned sufficiently to distinguish objects, he perceived the danger that must be dogging the heels of his main party. All about the camp were traces of Indians who must have been prowling about it at the time his people had passed the night there ; and who must still be hovering about them. Convinced, now, that the main party could not be at any great distance, he mounted a scout on the best horse, and sent him forward to overtake them, to warn them of their danger, and to order them to halt, until he should rejoin them.

In the afternoon, to his great joy, he met the scout returning, with six comrades from the main party, leading fresh horses for his accommodation; and on the following day (September 25th) all hands were once more reunited, after a separation of nearly three weeks. Their meeting was hearty and joyous; for they had both experienced dangers and perplexities.

The main party, in pursuing their course up the Wind River valley, had been dogged the whole way by a war party of Crows. In one place, they had been fired upon, but without injury; in another place, one of their horses had been cut loose, and carried off. At length, they were so closely beset, that they were obliged to make a retrograde move, lest they should be surprised and overcome. This was the movement which had caused such perplexity to Captain Bonneville.

The whole party now remained encamped for two or three days, to give repose to both men and horses. Some of the trappers, however, pursued their vocations about the neighbouring streams. While one of them was setting his traps, he heard the tramp of horses, and looking up, beheld a party of Crow braves moving along at no great distance, with a considerable cavalcade. The trapper hastened to conceal himself, but was discerned by the quick eye of the savages. With whoops and yells, they dragged him from his hiding-place, flourished over his head their tomahawks and scalping-knives, and for a time, the poor trapper gave himself up for lost. Fortunately, the Crows were in a jocose, rather than a sanguinary mood. They amused themselves heartily, for a while, at the expense of his terrors; and after having played off divers Crow pranks and pleasantries, suffered him to depart unharmed. It is true, they stripped him completely, one taking his horse, another his gun, a third his traps, a fourth his blanket, and so on, all his accoutrements, and even his clothing, until he was stark naked; but then they generously made him a present of an old tattered buffalo robe, and dismissed him, with many complimentary speeches, and much laughter. When the trapper returned to the camp, in such sorry plight, he was greeted with peals of laughter from his comrades, and seemed more mortified by the style in which he had been dismissed, than rejoiced at escaping with his life. A circumstance which he related to Captain Bonneville, gave

but, as soon as it was sufficiently dark, to make a rapid move for the summit of the mountain, and seek some secluded spot for their night's lodgings.

Accordingly, as the sun went down, the little party came to a halt, made a large fire, spitted their buffalo meat on wooden sticks, and, when sufficiently roasted, planted the savory viands before them; cutting off huge slices with their hunting knives, and supping with a hunter's appetite. The light of their fire would not fail, as they knew, to attract the attention of an Indian horde in the neighbourhood; but they trusted to be off and away, before any prowlers could reach the place. While they were supping thus hastily, however, one of their party suddenly started up, and shouted "Indians." All were instantly on their feet, with their rifles in their hands; but could see no enemy. The man, however, declared that he had seen an Indian advancing, cautiously, along the trail which they had made in coming to the encampment, who, the moment he was perceived, had thrown himself on the ground, and disappeared. He urged Captain Bonneville instantly to decamp. The captain, however, took the matter more coolly. The single fact, that the Indian had endeavoured to hide himself, convinced him that he was not one of a party, on the advance to make an attack. He was, probably, some scout, who had followed up their trail, until he came in sight of their fire. He would, in such case, return, and report what he had seen to his companions. These, supposing the white men had encamped for the night, would keep aloof until very late, when all should be asleep. They would, then, according to Indian tactics, make their stealthy approaches, and place themselves in ambush around, preparatory to their attack, at the usual hour of daylight.

Such was Captain Bonneville's conclusion; in consequence of which, he counselled his men to keep perfectly quiet, and act as if free from all alarm, until the proper time arrived for a move. They accordingly, continued their repast with pretended appetite and jollity; and then trimmed and replenished their fire, as if for a bivouac. As soon, however, as the night had completely set in, they left their fire blazing, walked quietly among the willows, and then leaping into their saddles, made off as noiselessly as possible. In proportion as they left the point of danger behind them, they relaxed in their rigid and anxious taciturnity, and began to joke at the

expense of their enemy, whom they pictured to themselves mousing in the neighbourhood of their deserted fire, waiting for the proper time of attack, and preparing for a grand disappointment.

About midnight, feeling satisfied that they had gained a secure distance, they posted one of their number to keep watch, in case the enemy should follow on their trail, and then, turning abruptly into a dense and matted thicket of willows, halted for the night at the foot of the mountain, instead of making for the summit, as they had originally intended.

A trapper in the wilderness, like a sailor on the ocean, snatches morsels of enjoyment in the midst of trouble, and sleeps soundly when surrounded by danger. The little party now made their arrangements for sleep with perfect calmness; they did not venture to make a fire and cook, it is true, though generally done by hunters whenever they come to a halt, and have provisions. They comforted themselves, however, by smoking a tranquil pipe; and then calling in the watch, and turning loose the horses, stretched themselves on their pallets, agreed that whoever should first awake, should rouse the rest; and in a little while were all in as sound sleep as though in the midst of a fortress.

A little before day, they were all on the alert; it was the hour for Indian maraud. A sentinel was immediately detached, to post himself at a little distance on their trail, and give the alarm, should he see or hear an enemy.

With the first blink of dawn, the rest sought the horses; brought them to the camp, and tied them up, until an hour after sunrise; when, the sentinel having reported that all was well, they sprang once more into their saddles, and pursued the most covert and secret paths up the mountain, avoiding the direct route.

At noon, they halted and made a hasty repast; and then bent their course so as to regain the route from which they had diverged. They were now made sensible of the danger from which they had just escaped. There were tracks of Indians who had evidently been in pursuit of them; but had recently returned, baffled in their search.

Trusting that they had now got a fair start, and could not be overtaken before night, even in case the Indians should renew the chase, they pushed briskly forward, and did not

encamp until late ; when they cautiously concealed themselves in a secure nook of the mountains.

Without any further alarm, they made their way to the head waters of Wind River, and reached the neighbourhood in which they had appointed the rendezvous with their companions. It was within the precincts of the Crow country ; the Wind River valley being one of the favourite haunts of that restless tribe. After much searching, Captain Bonneville came upon a trail which had evidently been made by his main party. It was so old, however, that he feared his people might have left the neighbourhood ; driven off, perhaps, by some of those war parties which were on the prowl. He continued his search with great anxiety, and no little fatigue ; for his horses were jaded, and almost crippled, by their forced marches and scramblings through rocky defiles.

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some insight into the cause of this extreme jocularity on the part of the Crows. They had evidently had a run of luck, and, like winning gamblers, were in high good humour. Among twenty-six fine horses, and some mules, which composed their cavalcade, the trapper recognised a number which had belonged to Fitzpatrick's brigade, when they parted company on the Bighorn. It was supposed, therefore, that these vagabonds had been on his trail, and robbed him of part of his cavalry.

On the day following this affair, three Crows came into Captain Bonneville's camp, with the most easy, innocent, if not impudent air imaginable; walking about with that imperturbable coolness and unconcern, in which the Indian rivals the fine gentleman. As they had not been of the set which stripped the trapper, though evidently of the same band, they were not molested. Indeed, Captain Bonneville treated them with his usual kindness and hospitality; permitting them to remain all day in the camp, and even to pass the night there. At the same time, however, he caused a strict watch to be maintained on all their movements; and at night, stationed an armed sentinel near them. The Crows remonstrated against the latter being armed. This only made the captain suspect them to be spies, who meditated treachery; he redoubled, therefore, his precautions. At the same time, he assured his guests, that while they were perfectly welcome to the shelter and comfort of his camp, yet, should any of their tribe venture to approach during the night, they would certainly be shot; which would be a very unfortunate circumstance, and much to be deplored. To the latter remark, they fully assented; and shortly afterward commenced a wild song, or chant, which they kept up for a long time, and in which, they very probably gave their friends, who might be prowling around the camp, notice that the white men were on the alert. The night passed away without disturbance. In the morning, the three Crow guests were very pressing that Captain Bonneville and his party should accompany them to their camp, which they said was close by. Instead of accepting their invitation, Captain Bonneville took his departure with all possible dispatch, eager to be out of the vicinity of such a piratical horde; nor did he relax the diligence of his march, until, on the second day, he reached the banks of the Sweet Water, beyond the limits of the Crow

country, and a heavy fall of snow had obliterated all traces of his course.

He now continued on for some few days, at a slower pace, round the point of the mountain towards Green River, and arrived once more at the caches, on the 14th of October.

Here they found traces of the band of Indians who had hunted them in the defile towards the head waters of Wind River. Having lost all trace of them on their way over the mountains, they had turned and followed back their trail down Green River valley to the caches. One of these they had discovered and broken open, but it fortunately contained nothing but fragments of old iron, which they had scattered about in all directions, and then departed. In examining their deserted camp, Captain Bonneville discovered that it numbered thirty-nine fires, and had more reason than ever to congratulate himself on having escaped the clutches of such a formidable band of freebooters.

He now turned his course southward, under cover of the mountains, and on the 25th of October reached Liberge's Ford, a tributary of the Colorado, where he came suddenly upon the trail of this same war party, which had crossed the stream so recently, that the banks were yet wet with the water that had been splashed upon them. To judge from their tracks, they could not be less than three hundred warriors, and apparently of the Crow nation.

Captain Bonneville was extremely uneasy lest this overpowering force should come upon him in some place where he would not have the means of fortifying himself promptly. He now moved towards Hane's Fork, another tributary of the Colorado, where he encamped, and remained during the 26th of October. Seeing a large cloud of smoke to the south, he supposed it to arise from some encampment of Shoshonies, and sent scouts to procure information, and to purchase a lodge. It was, in fact, a band of Shoshonies, but with them were encamped Fitzpatrick and his party of trappers. That active leader had an eventful story to relate of his fortunes in the country of the Crows. After parting with Captain Bonneville on the banks of the Bighorn, he made for the west, to trap upon Powder and Tongue Rivers. He had between twenty and thirty men with him, and about one hundred horses. So large a cavalcade could not pass through the Crow country without attracting the attention of its free-

booting hordes. A large band of Crows were soon on their traces, and came up with them on the 5th of September, just as they had reached Tongue River. The Crow chief came forward with great appearance of friendship, and proposed to Fitzpatrick that they should encamp together. The latter, however, not having any faith in Crows, declined the invitation, and pitched his camp three miles off. He then rode over, with two or three men, to visit the Crow chief, by whom he was received with great apparent cordiality. In the meantime, however, a party of young braves, who considered themselves absolved by his distrust from all scruples of honour, made a circuit privately, and dashed into his encampment. Captain Stewart, who had remained there in the absence of Fitzpatrick, behaved with great spirit; but the Crows were too numerous and active. They had got possession of the camp, and soon made booty of everything—carrying off all the horses. On their way back they met Fitzpatrick returning to his camp; and finished their exploit by rifling and nearly stripping him.

A negotiation now took place between the plundered white men and the triumphant Crows; what eloquence and management Fitzpatrick made use of, we do not know but he succeeded in prevailing upon the Crow chieftain to return him his horses and many of his traps; together with his rifles and a few rounds of ammunition for each man. He then set out with all speed to abandon the Crow country, before he should meet with any fresh disasters.

After his departure, the consciences of some of the most orthodox Crows pricked them sorely for having suffered such a cavalcade to escape out of their hands. Anxious to wipe off so foul a stigma on the reputation of the Crow nation, they followed on his trail, nor quitted hovering about him on his march until they had stolen a number of his best horses and mules. It was, doubtless, this same band which came upon the lonely trapper on the Popo Agie, and generously gave him an old buffalo robe in exchange for his rifle, his traps, and all his accoutrements. With these anecdotes, we shall, for the present, take our leave of the Crow country and its vagabond chivalry.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CROSSING an elevated ridge, Captain Bonneville now came upon Bear River, which, from its source to its entrance into the Great Salt Lake, describes the figure of a horse-shoe. One of the principal head waters of this river, although supposed to abound with beaver, has never been visited by the trapper; rising among rugged mountains, and being barricaded by fallen pine trees and tremendous precipices.

Proceeding down this river, the party encamped on the 6th of November, at the outlet of a lake about thirty miles long, and from two to three miles in width, completely embedded in low ranges of mountains, and connected with Bear River by an impassable swamp. It is called the Little Lake, to distinguish it from the great one of salt water.

On the 10th of November, Captain Bonneville visited a place in the neighbourhood which is quite a region of natural curiosities. An area of about half a mile square presents a level surface of white clay or fuller's earth, perfectly spotless, resembling a great slab of Parian marble, or a sheet of dazzling snow. The effect is strikingly beautiful at all times: in summer, when it is surrounded with verdure, or in autumn, when it contrasts its bright immaculate surface with the withered herbage. Seen from a distant eminence, it then shines like a mirror, set in the brown landscape. Around this plain are clustered numerous springs of various sizes and temperatures. One of them, of scalding heat, boils furiously and incessantly, rising to the height of two or three feet. In another place, there is an aperture in the earth, from which rushes a column of steam that forms a perpetual cloud. The ground for some distance around sounds hollow, and startles the solitary trapper, as he hears the tramp of his horse giving the sound of a muffled drum. He pictures to himself a mysterious gulf below, a place of hidden fires, and gazes round him with awe and uneasiness.

The most noted curiosity, however, of this singular region, is the *Beer Spring*, of which trappers give wonderful accounts. They are said to turn aside from their route through the country to drink of its waters, with as much eagerness as the Arab seeks some famous well of the desert. Captain Bonneville describes it as having the taste of beer. His men

drank it with avidity, and in copious draughts. It did not appear to him to possess any medicinal properties, or to produce any peculiar effects. The Indians, however, refuse to taste it, and endeavour to persuade the white men from doing so.

We have heard this also called the Soda Spring, and described as containing iron and sulphur. It probably possesses some of the properties of the Ballston water.

The time had now arrived for Captain Bonneville to go in quest of the party of free trappers, detached in the beginning of July, under the command of Mr. Hodgkiss, to trap upon the head waters of Salmon River. His intention was to unite them with the party with which he was at present travelling, that all might go into quarters together for the winter. Accordingly, on the 11th of November, he took a temporary leave of his band, appointing a rendezvous on Snake River, and, accompanied by three men, set out upon his journey. His route lay across the plain of the Portneuf, a tributary stream of Snake River, called after an unfortunate Canadian trapper, murdered by the Indians. The whole country through which he passed, bore evidence of volcanic convulsions and conflagrations in the olden time. Great masses of lava lay scattered about in every direction; the crags and cliffs had apparently been under the action of fire; the rocks in some places seemed to have been in a state of fusion; the plain was rent and split with deep chasms and gullies, some of which were partly filled with lava.

They had not proceeded far, however, before they saw a party of horsemen, galloping full tilt towards them. They instantly turned, and made full speed for the covert of a woody stream, to fortify themselves among the trees. The Indians came to a halt, and one of them came forward alone. He reached Captain Bonneville and his men just as they were dismounting and about to post themselves. A few words dispelled all uneasiness. It was a party of twenty-five Banneck Indians, friendly to the whites, and they proposed, through their envoy, that both parties should encamp together, and hunt the buffalo, of which they had discovered several large herds hard by. Captain Bonneville cheerfully assented to their proposition, being curious to see their manner of hunting.

Both parties accordingly encamped together on a convenient spot, and prepared for the hunt. The Indians first posted a

boy on a small hill near the camp, to keep a look-out for enemies. The "runners," then, as they are called, mounted on fleet horses, and armed with bows and arrows, moved slowly and cautiously toward the buffalo, keeping as much as possible out of sight, in hollows and ravines. When within a proper distance, a signal was given, and they all opened at once like a pack of hounds, with a full chorus of yells, dashing into the midst of the herds, and launching their arrows to the right and left. The plain seemed absolutely to shake under the tramp of the buffalo, as they scoured off. The cows in headlong panic, the bulls furious with rage, uttering deep roars, and occasionally turning with a desperate rush upon their pursuers. Nothing could surpass the spirit, grace, and dexterity, with which the Indians managed their horses; wheeling and coursing among the affrighted herd, and launching their arrows with unerring aim. In the midst of the apparent confusion, they selected their victims with perfect judgment, generally aiming at the fattest of the cows, the flesh of the bull being nearly worthless, at this season of the year. In a few minutes, each of the hunters had crippled three or four cows. A single shot was sufficient for the purpose, and the animal, once maimed, was left to be completely dispatched at the end of the chase. Frequently, a cow was killed on the spot by a single arrow. In one instance, Captain Bonneville saw an Indian shoot his arrow completely through the body of a cow, so that it struck in the ground beyond. The bulls, however, are not so easily killed as the cows, and always cost the hunter several arrows; sometimes making battle upon the horses, and chasing them furiously, though severely wounded, with the darts still sticking in their flesh.

The grand scamper of the hunt being over, the Indians proceeded to dispatch the animals that had been disabled; then cutting up the carcasses, they returned with loads of meat to the camp, where the choicest pieces were soon roasting before large fires, and a hunters' feast succeeded; at which Captain Bonneville and his men were qualified, by previous fasting, to perform their parts with great vigour.

Some men are said to wax valorous upon a full stomach, and such seemed to be the case with the Banneck braves, who, in proportion as they crammed themselves with buffalo meat, grew stout of heart, until, the supper at an end, they began to chant war songs, setting forth their mighty deeds, and

the victories they had gained over the Blackfeet. Warming with the theme, and inflating themselves with their own eulogies, these magnanimous heroes of the trencher would start up, advance a short distance beyond the light of the fire, and apostrophize most vehemently their Blackfeet enemies, as though they had been within hearing. Ruffling, and swelling, and snorting, and slapping their breasts, and brandishing their arms, they would vociferate all their exploits; reminding the Blackfeet how they had drenched their towns in tears and blood; enumerate the blows they had inflicted, the warriors they had slain, the scalps they had brought off in triumph. Then, having said everything that could stir a man's spleen or pique his valour, they would dare their imaginary hearers, now that the Bannecks were few in number, to come and take their revenge—receiving no reply to this valorous bravado, they would conclude by all kinds of sneers and insults, deriding the Blackfeet for dastards and poltroons, that dared not accept their challenge. Such is the kind of swaggering and rhodomontade in which the “red men” are prone to indulge in their vainglorious moments; for, with all their vaunted taciturnity, they are vehemently prone at times to become eloquent about their exploits, and to sound their own trumpet.

Having vented their valour in this fierce effervescence, the Banneck braves gradually calmed down, lowered their crests, smoothed their ruffled feathers, and betook themselves to sleep, without placing a single guard over their camp; so that had the Blackfeet taken them at their word, but few of these braggart heroes might have survived for any further boasting.

On the following morning, Captain Bonneville purchased a supply of buffalo meat from his braggadocio friends; who, with all their vapouring, were in fact a very forlorn horde, destitute of firearms, and of almost everything that constitutes riches in savage life. The bargain concluded, the Bannecks set off for their village, which was situated, they said, at the mouth of the Portneuf, and Captain Bonneville and his companions shaped their course toward Snake River.

Arrived on the banks of that river, he found it rapid and boisterous, but not too deep to be forded. In traversing it, however, one of the horses was swept suddenly from his footing, and his rider was flung from the saddle into the midst of the stream. Both horse and horseman were extricated without any damage, excepting that the latter was completely

drenched, so that it was necessary to kindle a fire to dry him. While they were thus occupied, one of the party looking up, perceived an Indian scout cautiously reconnoitring them from the summit of a neighbouring hill. The moment he found himself discovered, he disappeared behind the hill. From his furtive movements, Captain Bonneville suspected him to be a scout from the Blackfeet camp, and that he had gone to report what he had seen to his companions. It would not do to loiter in such a neighbourhood, so the kindling of the fire was abandoned, the drenched horseman mounted in dripping condition, and the little band pushed forward directly into the plain, going at a smart pace, until they had gained a considerable distance from the place of supposed danger. Here encamping for the night, in the midst of abundance of sage, or wormwood, which afforded fodder for their horses, they kindled a huge fire for the benefit of their damp comrade, and then proceeded to prepare a sumptuous supper of buffalo humps and ribs, and other choice bits, which they had brought with them. After a hearty repast, relished with an appetite unknown to city epicures, they stretched themselves upon their couches of skins, and under the starry canopy of heaven, enjoyed the sound and sweet sleep of hardy and well-fed mountaineers.

They continued on their journey for several days, without any incident worthy of notice, and on the 19th of November, came upon traces of the party of which they were in search; such as burnt patches of prairie, and deserted camping grounds. All these were carefully examined, to discover by their freshness or antiquity the probable time that the trappers had left them; at length, after much wandering and investigating, they came upon the regular trail of the hunting party, which led into the mountains, and following it up briskly, came about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 20th, upon the encampment of Hodgkiss and his band of free trappers, in the bosom of a mountain valley.

It will be recollected that these free trappers, who were masters of themselves and their movements, had refused to accompany Captain Bonneville back to Green River in the preceding month of July, preferring to trap about the upper waters of the Salmon River, where they expected to find plenty of beaver, and a less dangerous neighbourhood. Their hunt had not been very successful. They had penetrated the great range of mountains among which some of the upper branches

of Salmon River take their rise, but had become so entangled among immense and almost impassable barricades of fallen pines, and so impeded by tremendous precipices, that a great part of their season had been wasted among those mountains. At one time, they had made their way through them, and reached the Boissée River; but meeting with a band of Banneck Indians, from whom they apprehended hostilities, they had again taken shelter among the mountains, where they were found by Captain Bonneville. In the neighbourhood of their encampment, the captain had the good fortune to meet with a family of those wanderers of the mountains, emphatically called "*les dignes de pitié*," or Poor-devil Indians. These, however, appear to have forfeited the title, for they had with them a fine lot of skins of beaver, elk, deer, and mountain sheep. These, Captain Bonneville purchased from them at a fair valuation, and sent them off astonished at their own wealth, and no doubt objects of envy to all their pitiful tribe.

Being now reinforced by Hodgkiss and his band of free trappers, Captain Bonneville put himself at the head of the united parties, and set out to rejoin those he had recently left at the Beer Spring, that they might all go into winter quarters on Snake River. On his route, he encountered many heavy falls of snow, which melted almost immediately, so as not to impede his march, and on the 4th of December, he found his other party, encamped at the very place where he had partaken in the buffalo hunt with the Bannecks.

That braggart horde was encamped but about three miles off, and were just then in high glee and festivity, and more swaggering than ever, celebrating a prodigious victory. It appeared that a party of their braves being out on a hunting excursion, discovered a band of Blackfeet moving, as they thought, to surprise their hunting camp. The Bannecks immediately posted themselves on each side of a dark ravine, through which the enemy must pass, and, just as they were entangled in the midst of it, attacked them with great fury. The Blackfeet, struck with sudden panic, threw off their buffalo robes and fled, leaving one of their warriors dead on the spot. The victors eagerly gathered up the spoils; but their greatest prize was the scalp of the Blackfoot brave. This they bore off in triumph to their village, where it had ever since been an object of the greatest exultation and rejoicing. It had been elevated upon a pole in the centre of the village,

where the warriors had celebrated the scalp dance round it, with war feasts, war songs, and warlike harangues. It had then been given up to the women and boys; who had paraded it up and down the village with shouts and chants and antic dances; occasionally saluting it with all kinds of taunts, invectives, and revilings.

The Blackfeet, in this affair, do not appear to have acted up to the character which has rendered them objects of such terror. Indeed, their conduct in war, to the inexperienced observer, is full of inconsistencies; at one time they are headlong in courage, and heedless of danger; at another time cautious almost to cowardice. To understand these apparent incongruities, one must know their principles of warfare. A war party, however triumphant, if they lose a warrior in the fight, bring back a cause of mourning to their people, which casts a shade over the glory of their achievement. Hence, the Indian is often less fierce and reckless in general battle, than he is in a private brawl; and the chiefs are checked in their boldest undertakings by the fear of sacrificing their warriors.

This peculiarity is not confined to the Blackfeet. Among the Osages, says Captain Bonneville, when a warrior falls in battle, his comrades, though they may have fought with consummate valour, and won a glorious victory, will leave their arms upon the field of battle, and, returning home with dejected countenances, will halt without the encampment, and wait until the relatives of the slain come forth and invite them to mingle again with their people.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN establishing his winter camp near the Portneuf, Captain Bonneville had drawn off to some little distance from his Banneck friends, to avoid all annoyance from their intimacy or intrusions. In so doing, however, he had been obliged to take up his quarters on the extreme edge of the flat land, where he was encompassed with ice and snow, and had nothing better for his horses to subsist on than wormwood. The Bannecks, on the contrary, were encamped among fine springs of water, where there was grass in abundance. Some of these springs gush out of the earth in sufficient quantity to turn a

the victories they had gained over the Blackfeet. Warming with the theme, and inflating themselves with their own eulogies, these magnanimous heroes of the trencher would start up, advance a short distance beyond the light of the fire, and apostrophize most vehemently their Blackfeet enemies, as though they had been within hearing. Ruffling, and swelling, and snorting, and slapping their breasts, and brandishing their arms, they would vociferate all their exploits; reminding the Blackfeet how they had drenched their towns in tears and blood; enumerate the blows they had inflicted, the warriors they had slain, the scalps they had brought off in triumph. Then, having said everything that could stir a man's spleen or pique his valour, they would dare their imaginary hearers, now that the Bannecks were few in number, to come and take their revenge—receiving no reply to this valorous bravado, they would conclude by all kinds of sneers and insults, deriding the Blackfeet for dastards and poltroons, that dared not accept their challenge. Such is the kind of swaggering and rhodomontade in which the “red men” are prone to indulge in their vainglorious moments; for, with all their vaunted taciturnity, they are vehemently prone at times to become eloquent about their exploits, and to sound their own trumpet.

Having vented their valour in this fierce effervescence, the Banneck braves gradually calmed down, lowered their crests, smoothed their ruffled feathers, and betook themselves to sleep, without placing a single guard over their camp; so that had the Blackfeet taken them at their word, but few of these braggart heroes might have survived for any further boasting.

On the following morning, Captain Bonneville purchased a supply of buffalo meat from his braggadocio friends; who, with all their vapouring, were in fact a very forlorn horde, destitute of firearms, and of almost everything that constitutes riches in savage life. The bargain concluded, the Bannecks set off for their village, which was situated, they said, at the mouth of the Portneuf, and Captain Bonneville and his companions shaped their course toward Snake River.

Arrived on the banks of that river, he found it rapid and boisterous, but not too deep to be forded. In traversing it, however, one of the horses was swept suddenly from his footing, and his rider was flung from the saddle into the midst of the stream. Both horse and horseman were extricated without any damage, excepting that the latter was completely

drenched, so that it was necessary to kindle a fire to dry him. While they were thus occupied, one of the party looking up, perceived an Indian scout cautiously reconnoitring them from the summit of a neighbouring hill. The moment he found himself discovered, he disappeared behind the hill. From his furtive movements, Captain Bonneville suspected him to be a scout from the Blackfeet camp, and that he had gone to report what he had seen to his companions. It would not do to loiter in such a neighbourhood, so the kindling of the fire was abandoned, the drenched horseman mounted in dripping condition, and the little band pushed forward directly into the plain, going at a smart pace, until they had gained a considerable distance from the place of supposed danger. Here encamping for the night, in the midst of abundance of sage, or wormwood, which afforded fodder for their horses, they kindled a huge fire for the benefit of their damp comrade, and then proceeded to prepare a sumptuous supper of buffalo humps and ribs, and other choice bits, which they had brought with them. After a hearty repast, relished with an appetite unknown to city epicures, they stretched themselves upon their couches of skins, and under the starry canopy of heaven, enjoyed the sound and sweet sleep of hardy and well-fed mountaineers.

They continued on their journey for several days, without any incident worthy of notice, and on the 19th of November, came upon traces of the party of which they were in search; such as burnt patches of prairie, and deserted camping grounds. All these were carefully examined, to discover by their freshness or antiquity the probable time that the trappers had left them; at length, after much wandering and investigating, they came upon the regular trail of the hunting party, which led into the mountains, and following it up briskly, came about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 20th, upon the encampment of Hodgkiss and his band of free trappers, in the bosom of a mountain valley.

It will be recollected that these free trappers, who were masters of themselves and their movements, had refused to accompany Captain Bonneville back to Green River in the preceding month of July, preferring to trap about the upper waters of the Salmon River, where they expected to find plenty of beaver, and a less dangerous neighbourhood. Their hunt had not been very successful. They had penetrated the great range of mountains among which some of the upper branches

of Salmon River take their rise, but had become so entangled among immense and almost impassable barricades of fallen pines, and so impeded by tremendous precipices, that a great part of their season had been wasted among those mountains. At one time, they had made their way through them, and reached the Boissée River; but meeting with a band of Banneck Indians, from whom they apprehended hostilities, they had again taken shelter among the mountains, where they were found by Captain Bonneville. In the neighbourhood of their encampment, the captain had the good fortune to meet with a family of those wanderers of the mountains, emphatically called "*les dignes de pitié*," or Poor-devil Indians. These, however, appear to have forfeited the title, for they had with them a fine lot of skins of beaver, elk, deer, and mountain sheep. These, Captain Bonneville purchased from them at a fair valuation, and sent them off astonished at their own wealth, and no doubt objects of envy to all their pitiful tribe.

Being now reinforced by Hodgkiss and his band of free trappers, Captain Bonneville put himself at the head of the united parties, and set out to rejoin those he had recently left at the Beer Spring, that they might all go into winter quarters on Snake River. On his route, he encountered many heavy falls of snow, which melted almost immediately, so as not to impede his march, and on the 4th of December, he found his other party, encamped at the very place where he had partaken in the buffalo hunt with the Bannecks.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

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mill ; and furnish beautiful streams, clear as crystal, and full of trout of a large size ; which may be seen darting about the transparent water.

Winter now set in regularly. The snow had fallen frequently, and in large quantities, and covered the ground to the depth of a foot ; and the continued coldness of the weather prevented any thaw.

By degrees, a distrust which at first subsisted between the Indians and the trappers, subsided, and gave way to mutual confidence and good-will. A few presents convinced the chiefs that the white men were their friends : nor were the white men wanting in proofs of the honesty and good faith of their savage neighbours. Occasionally, the deep snow and the want of fodder obliged them to turn their weakest horses out to roam in quest of sustenance. If they at any time strayed to the camp of the Bannecks, they were immediately brought back. It must be confessed, however, that if the stray horse happened, by any chance, to be in vigorous plight and good condition, though he was equally sure to be returned by the honest Bannecks, yet it was always after the lapse of several days, and in a very gaunt and jaded state ; and always with the remark, that they had found him a long way off. The uncharitable were apt to surmise that he had, in the interim, been well used up in a buffalo hunt ; but those accustomed to Indian morality in the matter of horseflesh, consider it a singular evidence of honesty, that he should be brought back at all.

Being convinced, therefore, from these, and other circumstances, that his people were encamped in the neighbourhood of a tribe as honest as they were valiant, and satisfied that they would pass their winter unmolested, Captain Bonneville prepared for a reconnoitring expedition of great extent and peril. This was, to penetrate to the Hudson's Bay establishments on the banks of the Columbia, and to make himself acquainted with the country and the Indian tribes ; it being one part of his scheme to establish a trading post somewhere on the lower part of the river, so as to participate in the trade lost to the United States by the capture of Astoria. This expedition would, of course, take him through the Snake River country, and across the Blue Mountains, the scenes of so much hardship and disaster to Hunt and Crooks, and their Astorian bands, who first explored it, and he would have to

pass through it in the same frightful season, the depth of winter.

The idea of risk and hardship, however, only served to stimulate the adventurous spirit of the captain. He chose three companions for his journey, put up a small stock of necessaries in the most portable form, and selected five horses and mules for themselves and their baggage. He proposed to rejoin his band in the early part of March, at the winter encampment near the Portneuf. All these arrangements being completed, he mounted his horse on Christmas morning, and set off with his three comrades. They halted a little beyond the Banneck camp, and made their Christmas dinner, which, if not a very merry, was a very hearty one, after which they resumed their journey.

They were obliged to travel slowly, to spare their horses; for the snow had increased in depth to eighteen inches; and though somewhat packed and frozen, was not sufficiently so to yield firm footing. Their route lay to the west, down along the left side of Snake River; and they were several days in reaching the first, or American Falls. The banks of the river, for a considerable distance, both above and below the falls, have a volcanic character: masses of basaltic rock are piled one upon another; the water makes its way through their broken chasms, boiling through narrow channels, or pitching in beautiful cascades over ridges of basaltic columns.

Beyond these falls, they came to a picturesque, but inconsiderable stream, called the Cassié. It runs through a level valley, about four miles wide, where the soil is good; but the prevalent coldness and dryness of the climate is unfavourable to vegetation. Near to this stream there is a small mountain of mica slate, including garnets. Granite, in small blocks, is likewise seen in this neighbourhood, and white sandstone. From this river, the travellers had a prospect of the snowy height of the Salmon River Mountains to the north; the nearest, at least fifty miles distant.

In pursuing his course westward, Captain Bonneville generally kept several miles from Snake River, crossing the heads of its tributary streams; though he often found the open country so encumbered by volcanic rocks, as to render travelling extremely difficult. Whenever he approached Snake River, he found it running through a broad chasm, with steep, perpendicular sides of basaltic rock. After several

days' travel across a level plain, he came to a part of the river which filled him with astonishment and admiration. As far as the eye could reach, the river was walled in by perpendicular cliffs two hundred and fifty feet high, beetling like dark and gloomy battlements, while blocks and fragments lay in masses at their feet, in the midst of the boiling and whirling current. Just above, the whole stream pitched in one cascade above forty feet in height, with a thundering sound, casting up a volume of spray that hung in the air like a silver mist. These are called by some the Fishing Falls, as the salmon are taken here in immense quantities. They cannot get by these falls.

After encamping at this place all night, Captain Bonneville, at sunrise, descended with his party through a narrow ravine, or rather crevice, in the vast wall of basaltic rock which bordered the river; this being the only mode, for many miles, of getting to the margin of the stream.

The snow lay in a thin crust along the banks of the river, so that their travelling was much more easy than it had been hitherto. There were foot tracks, also, made by the natives, which greatly facilitated their progress. Occasionally, they met the inhabitants of this wild region; a timid race, and but scantily provided with the necessaries of life. Their dress consisted of a mantle about four feet square, formed of strips of rabbit skins sewed together: this they hung over their shoulders, in the ordinary Indian mode of wearing the blanket. Their weapons were bows and arrows; the latter tipped with obsidian, which abounds in the neighbourhood. Their huts were shaped like hay-stacks, and constructed of branches of willow covered with long grass, so as to be warm and comfortable. Occasionally, they were surrounded by small inclosures of wormwood, about three feet high, which gave them a cottage-like appearance. Three or four of these tenements were occasionally grouped together in some wild and striking situation, and had a picturesque effect. Sometimes they were in sufficient number to form a small hamlet. From these people, Captain Bonneville's party frequently purchased salmon, dried in an admirable manner, as were likewise the roes. This seemed to be their prime article of food; but they were extremely anxious to get buffalo meat in exchange.

The high walls and rocks, within which the travellers had been so long inclosed, now occasionally presented openings,

through which they were enabled to ascend to the plain, and to cut off considerable bends of the river.

Throughout the whole extent of this vast and singular chasm, the scenery of the river is said to be of the most wild and romantic character. The rocks present every variety of masses and grouping. Numerous small streams come rushing and boiling through narrow clefts and ravines: one of a considerable size issued from the face of a precipice, within twenty-five feet of its summit; and after running in nearly a horizontal line for about one hundred feet, fell, by numerous small cascades, to the rocky bank of the river.

In its career through this vast and singular defile, Snake River is upwards of three hundred yards wide, and as clear as spring water. Sometimes it steals along with a tranquil and noiseless course; at other times, for miles and miles, it dashes on in a thousand rapids, wild and beautiful to the eye, and lulling the ear with the soft tumult of plashing waters.

Many of the tributary streams of Snake River rival it in the wildness and picturesqueness of their scenery. That called the Bruneau is particularly cited. It runs through a tremendous chasm, rather than a valley, extending upwards of a hundred and fifty miles. You come upon it on a sudden, in traversing a level plain. It seems as if you could throw a stone across from cliff to cliff; yet, the valley is near two thousand feet deep: so that the river looks like an inconsiderable stream. Basaltic rocks rise perpendicularly, so that it is impossible to get from the plain to the water, or from the river margin to the plain. The current is bright and limpid. Hot springs are found on the borders of this river. One bursts out of the cliffs forty feet above the river, in a stream sufficient to turn a mill, and sends up a cloud of vapour.

We find a characteristic picture of this volcanic region of mountains and streams, furnished by the journal of Mr. Wyeth, which lies before us; who ascended a peak in the neighbourhood we are describing. "From this summit, the country," he says, "appears an indescribable chaos; the tops of the hills exhibit the same strata as far as the eye can reach, and appear to have once formed the level of the country; and the valleys to be formed by the sinking of the earth, rather than the rising of the hills. Through the deep cracks and chasms thus formed, the rivers and brooks make their way, which renders it difficult to follow them. All these basaltic

channels are called cut rocks by the trappers. Many of the mountain streams disappear in the plains, either absorbed by their thirsty soil, and by the porous surface of the lava, or swallowed up in gulfs and chasms."

On the 12th of January (1834), Captain Bonneville reached Powder River; much the largest stream that he had seen since leaving the Portneuf. He struck it about three miles above its entrance into Snake River. Here he found himself above the lower narrows and defiles of the latter river, and in an open and level country. The natives now made their appearance in considerable numbers, and evinced the most insatiable curiosity respecting the white men; sitting in groups for hours together, exposed to the bleakest winds, merely for the pleasure of gazing upon the strangers, and watching every movement. These are of that branch of the great Snake tribe called Shoshokoes, or Root Diggers, from their subsisting, in a great measure, on the roots of the earth; though they likewise take fish in great quantities, and hunt in a small way. They are in general very poor; destitute of most of the comforts of life, and extremely indolent: but a mild, inoffensive race. They differ in many respects from the other branch of the Snake tribe, the Shoshonies; who possess horses, are more roving and adventurous, and hunt the buffalo.

On the following day, as Captain Bonneville approached the mouth of Powder River, he discovered at least a hundred families of these Diggers, as they are familiarly called, assembled in one place. The women and children kept at a distance, perched among the rocks and cliffs; their eager curiosity being somewhat dashed with fear. From their elevated posts they scrutinized the strangers with the most intense earnestness; regarding them with almost as much awe as if they had been beings of a supernatural order.

The men, however, were by no means so shy and reserved; but importuned Captain Bonneville and his companions excessively by their curiosity. Nothing escaped their notice; and anything they could lay their hands on underwent the most minute examination. To get rid of such inquisitive neighbours the travellers kept on for a considerable distance before they encamped for the night.

The country hereabout was generally level and sandy, producing very little grass, but a considerable quantity of

sage or wormwood. The plains were diversified by isolated hills, all cut off, as it were, about the same height, so as to have tabular summits. In this they resembled the isolated hills of the great prairies, east of the Rocky Mountains, especially those found on the plains of the Arkansas.

The high precipices which had hitherto walled in the channel of Snake River had now disappeared, and the banks were of the ordinary height. It should be observed, that the great valleys or plains, through which the Snake River wound its course, were generally of great breadth, extending on each side from thirty to forty miles, where the view was bounded by unbroken ridges of mountains.

The travellers found but little snow in the neighbourhood of Powder River, though the weather continued intensely cold. They learnt a lesson, however, from their forlorn friends, the Root Diggers, which they subsequently found of great service in their wintry wanderings. They frequently observed them to be furnished with long ropes, twisted from the bark of the wormwood. This they used as a slow match, carrying it always lighted. Whenever they wished to warm themselves, they would gather together a little dry wormwood, apply the match, and in an instant produce a cheering blaze.

Captain Bonneville gives a cheerless account of a village of these Diggers, which he saw in crossing the plain below Powder River. "They live," says he, "without any further protection from the inclemency of the season, than a sort of break-weather, about three feet high, composed of sage (or wormwood), and erected around them in the shape of a half moon." Whenever he met with them, however, they had always a large suite of half-starved dogs; for these animals, in savage as well as in civilized life, seem to be the concomitants of beggary.

These dogs, it must be allowed, were of more use than the beggarly curs of cities. The Indian children used them in hunting the small game of the neighbourhood, such as rabbits and prairie dogs; in which mongrel kind of chase they acquitted themselves with some credit.

Sometimes the Diggers aspire to nobler game, and succeed in entrapping the antelope, the fleetest animal of the prairies. The process by which this is effected is somewhat singular. "When the snow has disappeared," says Captain Bonneville,

"and the ground become soft, the women go into the thickest fields of wormwood, and pulling it up in great quantities, construct with it a hedge, about three feet high, inclosing about a hundred acres. A single opening is left for the admission of the game. This done, the women conceal themselves behind the wormwood, and wait patiently for the coming of the antelopes, which sometimes enter this spacious trap in considerable numbers. As soon as they are in the women give the signal, and the men hasten to play their part. But one of them enters the pen at a time, and after chasing the terrified animals round the inclosure, is relieved by one of his companions. In this way the hunters take their turns, relieving each other, and keeping up a continued pursuit by relays, without fatigue to themselves. The poor antelopes, in the end, are so wearied down, that the whole party of men enter and dispatch them with clubs; not one escaping that has entered the inclosure. The most curious circumstance in this chase is, that an animal so fleet and agile as the antelope, and straining for its life, should range round and round this fated inclosure, without attempting to overleap the low barrier which surrounds it. Such, however, is said to be the fact; and such their only mode of hunting the antelope."

Notwithstanding the absence of all comfort and convenience in their habitations, and the general squalidness of their appearance, the Shoshokoes do not appear to be destitute of ingenuity. They manufacture good ropes, and even a tolerably fine thread, from a sort of weed found in their neighbourhood, and construct bowls and jugs out of a kind of basket-work, formed from small strips of wood plaited; these, by the aid of a little wax, they render perfectly water tight. Beside the roots, on which they mainly depend for subsistence, they collect great quantities of seed of various kinds, beaten with one hand out of the tops of the plants into wooden bowls held for that purpose. The seed thus collected is winnowed and parched, and ground between two stones into a kind of meal or flour; which, when mixed with water, forms a very palatable paste or gruel.

Some of these people, more provident and industrious than the rest, lay up a stock of dried salmon, and other fish, for winter; with these they were ready to traffic with the travellers for any objects of utility in Indian life; giving a large quantity in exchange for an awl, a knife, or a fish-hook.

Others were in the most abject state of want and starvation, and would even gather up the fish-bones which the travellers threw away after a repast, warm them over again at the fire, and pick them with the greatest avidity.

The farther Captain Bonneville advanced into the country of these Root Diggers, the more evidence he perceived of their rude and forlorn condition. "They were destitute," says he, "of the necessary covering to protect them from the weather; and seemed to be in the most unsophisticated ignorance of any other propriety or advantage in the use of clothing. One old dame had absolutely nothing on her person but a thread round her neck, from which was pendent a solitary bead."

What stage of human destitution, however, is too destitute for vanity! Though these naked and forlorn-looking beings had neither toilet to arrange, nor beauty to contemplate, their greatest passion was for a mirror. It was a "great medicine," in their eyes. The sight of one was sufficient, at any time, to throw them into a paroxysm of eagerness and delight; and they were ready to give anything they had for the smallest fragment in which they might behold their squalid features. With this simple instance of vanity, in its primitive but vigorous state, we shall close our remarks on the Root Diggers.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE temperature of the regions west of the Rocky Mountains is much milder than in the same latitudes on the Atlantic side; the upper plains, however, which lie at a distance from the sea-coast, are subject in winter to considerable vicissitude; being traversed by lofty "sierras," crowned with perpetual snow, which often produce flaws and streaks of intense cold. This was experienced by Captain Bonneville and his companions in their progress westward. At the time when they left the Bannecks, Snake River was frozen hard: as they proceeded, the ice became broken and floating; it gradually disappeared, and the weather became warm and pleasant, as they approached a tributary stream called the Little Wyer; and the soil, which was generally of a watery clay, with occasional intervals of sand, was soft to the tread of the horses.

After a time, however, the mountains approached and flanked the river; the snow lay deep in the valleys, and the current was once more icebound.

Here they were visited by a party of Root Diggers, who were apparently rising in the world, for they had "horse to ride and weapon to wear," and were altogether better clad and equipped than any of the tribe that Captain Bonneville had met with. They were just from the plain of Boisé River, where they had left a number of their tribe, all as well provided as themselves; having guns, horses, and comfortable clothing. All these they obtained from the Lower Nez Percés, with whom they were in habits of frequent traffic. They appeared to have imbibed from that tribe their non-combative principles, being mild and inoffensive in their manners. Like them, also, they had something of religious feelings; for Captain Bonneville observed that, before eating, they washed their hands, and made a short prayer; which he understood was their invariable custom. From these Indians he obtained a considerable supply of fish, and an excellent and well-conditioned horse, to replace one which had become too weak for the journey.

The travellers now moved forward with renovated spirits; the snow, it is true, lay deeper and deeper as they advanced, but they trudged on merrily, considering themselves well provided for the journey, which could not be of much longer duration.

They had intended to proceed up the banks of Gun Creek, a stream which flows into Snake River from the west; but were assured by the natives that the route in that direction was impracticable. The latter advised them to keep along Snake River, where they would not be impeded by the snow. Taking one of the Diggers for a guide, they set off along the river, and to their joy soon found the country free from snow, as had been predicted, so that their horses once more had the benefit of tolerable pasturage. Their Digger proved an excellent guide, trudging cheerily in the advance. He made an unsuccessful shot or two at a deer and a beaver; but at night found a rabbit hole, whence he extracted the occupant, upon which, with the addition of a fish given him by the travellers, he made a hearty supper, and retired to rest, filled with good cheer and good-humour.

The next day the travellers came to where the hills closed

upon the river, leaving here and there intervals of undulating meadow land. The river was sheeted with ice, broken into hills at long intervals. The Digger kept on ahead of the party, crossing and recrossing the river in pursuit of game, until, unluckily, encountering a brother Digger, he stole off with him, without the ceremony of leave-taking.

Being now left to themselves, they proceeded until they came to some Indian huts, the inhabitants of which spoke a language totally different from any they had yet heard. One, however, understood the Nez Percé language, and through him they made inquiries as to their route. These Indians were extremely kind and honest, and furnished them with a small quantity of meat; but none of them could be induced to act as guides.

Immediately in the route of the travellers lay a high mountain, which they ascended with some difficulty. The prospect from the summit was grand but disheartening. Directly before them towered the loftiest peaks of Immahah, rising far higher than the elevated ground on which they stood: on the other hand, they were enabled to scan the course of the river, dashing along through deep chasms, between rocks and precipices, until lost in a distant wilderness of mountains, which closed the savage landscape.

They remained for a long time contemplating, with perplexed and anxious eye, this wild congregation of mountain barriers, and seeking to discover some practicable passage. The approach of evening obliged them to give up the task, and to seek some camping ground for the night. Moving briskly forward, and plunging and tossing through a succession of deep snow-drifts, they at length reached a valley known among trappers as the "Grand Rond," which they found entirely free from snow.

This is a beautiful and very fertile valley, about twenty miles long and five or six broad; a bright cold stream called the *Fourche de Glace*, or Ice River, runs through it. Its sheltered situation, embosomed in mountains, renders it good pasturing ground in the winter time; when the elk come down to it in great numbers, driven out of the mountains by the snow. The Indians then resort to it to hunt. They likewise come to it in the summer time to dig the camash root, of which it produces immense quantities. When this plant is in blossom, the whole valley is tinted by its blue flowers, and looks like the ocean, when overcast by a cloud.

After passing a night in this valley, the travellers in the morning scaled the neighbouring hills, to look out for a more eligible route than that upon which they had unluckily fallen, and, after much reconnoitring, determined to make their way once more to the river, and to travel upon the ice when the banks should prove impassable.

On the second day after this determination, they were again upon Snake River, but, contrary to their expectations, it was nearly free from ice. A narrow riband ran along the shore, and sometimes there was a kind of bridge across the stream, formed of old ice and snow. For a short time, they jogged along the bank, with tolerable facility, but at length came to where the river forced its way into the heart of the mountains, winding between tremendous walls of basaltic rock, that rose perpendicularly from the water edge, frowning in bleak and gloomy grandeur. Here difficulties of all kinds beset their path. The snow was from two to three feet deep, but soft and yielding, so that the horses had no foothold, but kept plunging forward, straining themselves by perpetual efforts. Sometimes the crags and promontories forced them upon the narrow riband of ice that bordered the shore; sometimes they had to scramble over vast masses of rock which had tumbled from the impending precipices; sometimes they had to cross the stream upon the hazardous bridges of ice and snow, sinking to the knee at every step; sometimes they had to scale slippery acclivities, and to pass along narrow cornices, glazed with ice and sleet, a shouldering wall of rock on one side, a yawning precipice on the other, where a single false step would have been fatal. In a lower and less dangerous pass, two of their horses actually fell into the river; one was saved with much difficulty, but the boldness of the shore prevented their rescuing the other, and he was swept away by the rapid current.

In this way they struggled forward, manfully braving difficulties and dangers, until they came to where the bed of the river was narrowed to a mere chasm, with perpendicular walls of rock that defied all further progress. Turning their faces now to the mountain, they endeavoured to cross directly over it; but, after clambering nearly to the summit, found their path closed by insurmountable barriers.

Nothing now remained but to retrace their steps. To descend a cragged mountain, however, was more difficult and dangerous than to ascend it. They had to lower themselves,

cautiously and slowly, from steep to steep; and, while they managed with difficulty to maintain their own footing, to aid their horses by holding on firmly to the rope halters, as the poor animals stumbled among slippery rocks, or slid down icy declivities. Thus, after a day of intense cold, and severe and incessant toil, amidst the wildest of scenery, they managed, about nightfall, to reach the camping ground from which they had started in the morning, and for the first time in the course of their rugged and perilous expedition, felt their hearts quailing under their multiplied hardships.

A hearty supper, a tranquillizing pipe, and a sound night's sleep, put them all in better mood, and in the morning they held a consultation as to their future movements. About four miles behind, they had remarked a small ridge of mountains approaching closely to the river. It was determined to scale this ridge, and seek a passage into the valley which must lie beyond. Should they fail in this, but one alternative remained:—to kill their horses, dry the flesh for provisions, make boats of the hides, and, in these, commit themselves to the stream—a measure hazardous in the extreme.

A short march brought them to the foot of the mountain, but its steep and cragged sides almost discouraged hope. The only chance of scaling it was by broken masses of rock, piled one upon another, which formed a succession of crags, reaching nearly to the summit. Upon these they wrought their way with indescribable difficulty and peril, in a zigzag course, climbing from rock to rock, and helping their horses up after them; which scrambled among the crags like mountain goats, now and then dislodging some huge stone, which, the moment they had left it, would roll down the mountain, crashing and rebounding with terrific din. It was some time after dark before they reached a kind of platform on the summit of the mountain, where they could venture to encamp. The winds, which swept this naked height, had whirled all the snow into the valley beneath, so that the horses found tolerable winter pasturage on the dry grass which remained exposed. The travellers, though hungry in the extreme, were fain to make a very frugal supper; for they saw their journey was likely to be prolonged much beyond the anticipated term.

In fact, on the following day they discerned that, although already at a great elevation, they were only as yet upon the shoulder of the mountain. It proved to be a great sierra, or

ridge, of immense height, running parallel to the course of the river, swelling by degrees to lofty peaks, but the outline gashed by deep and precipitous ravines. This, in fact, was a part of the chain of Blue Mountains, in which the first adventurers to Astoria experienced such hardships.

We will not pretend to accompany the travellers step by step in this tremendous mountain scramble, into which they had unconsciously betrayed themselves. Day after day did their toil continue; peak after peak had they to traverse, struggling with difficulties and hardships known only to the mountain trapper. As their course lay north, they had to ascend the southern faces of the heights, where the sun had melted the snow, so as to render the ascent wet and slippery, and to keep both men and horses continually on the strain; while on the northern sides, the snow lay in such heavy masses, that it was necessary to beat a track, down which the horses might be led. Every now and then, also, their way was impeded by tall and numerous pines, some of which had fallen, and lay in every direction.

In the midst of these toils and hardships, their provisions gave out. For three days they were without food, and so reduced that they could scarcely drag themselves along. At length one of the mules, being about to give out from fatigue and famine, they hastened to dispatch him. Husbanding this miserable supply, they dried the flesh, and for three days subsisted upon the nutriment extracted from the bones. As to the meat, it was packed and preserved as long as they could do without it, not knowing how long they might remain bewildered in these desolate regions.

One of the men was now dispatched ahead, to reconnoitre the country, and to discover, if possible, some more practicable route. In the meantime, the rest of the party moved on slowly. After a lapse of three days, the scout rejoined them. He informed them that Snake River ran immediately below the sierra or mountainous ridge upon which they were travelling; that it was free from precipices, and was at no great distance from them in a direct line; but that it would be impossible for them to reach it without making a weary circuit. Their only course would be to cross the mountain ridge to the left.

Up this mountain, therefore, the weary travellers directed their steps; and the ascent, in their present weak and ex-

hausted state, was one of the severest parts of this most painful journey. For two days were they toiling slowly from cliff to cliff, beating at every step a path through the snow for their faltering horses. At length they reached the summit, where the snow was blown off; but in descending on the opposite side, they were often plunging through deep drifts, piled in the hollows and ravines.

Their provisions were now exhausted, and they and their horses almost ready to give out with fatigue and hunger; when one afternoon, just as the sun was sinking behind a blue line of distant mountain, they came to the brow of a height from which they beheld the smooth valley of the Immahah stretched out in smiling verdure below them.

The sight inspired almost a frenzy of delight. Roused to new ardour, they forgot for a time their fatigues, and hurried down the mountain, dragging their jaded horses after them, and sometimes compelling them to slide a distance of thirty or forty feet at a time. At length they reached the banks of the Immahah. The young grass was just beginning to sprout, and the whole valley wore an aspect of softness, verdure, and repose, heightened by the contrast of the frightful region from which they had just descended. To add to their joy, they observed Indian trails along the margin of the stream, and other signs, which gave them reason to believe that there was an encampment of the Lower Nez Percés in the neighbourhood, as it was within the accustomed range of that pacific and hospitable tribe.

The prospect of a supply of food stimulated them to new exertion, and they continued on as fast as the enfeebled state of themselves and their steeds would permit. At length, one of the men, more exhausted than the rest, threw himself upon the grass, and declared he could go no further. It was in vain to attempt to rouse him; his spirit had given out, and his replies only showed the dogged apathy of despair. His companions, therefore, encamped on the spot, kindled a blazing fire, and searched about for roots with which to strengthen and revive him. They all then made a starveling repast; but gathering round the fire, talked over past dangers and troubles, soothed themselves with the persuasion that all were now at an end, and went to sleep with the comforting hope that the morrow would bring them into plentiful quarters.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A TRANQUIL night's rest had sufficiently restored the broken-down traveller to enable him to resume his wayfaring, and all hands set forward on the Indian trail. With all their eagerness to arrive within reach of succour, such was their feeble and emaciated condition, that they advanced but slowly. Nor is it a matter of surprise that they should almost have lost heart, as well as strength. It was now (the 16th of February) fifty-three days that they had been travelling in the midst of winter, exposed to all kinds of privations and hardships: and for the last twenty days they had been entangled in the wild and desolate labyrinths of the snowy mountains; climbing and descending icy precipices, and nearly starved with cold and hunger.

All the morning they continued following the Indian trail, without seeing a human being, and were beginning to be discouraged, when, about noon, they discovered a horseman at a distance. He was coming directly towards them; but on discovering them, suddenly reined up his steed, came to a halt, and, after reconnoitring them for a time with great earnestness, seemed about to make a cautious retreat. They eagerly made signs of peace, and endeavoured, with the utmost anxiety, to induce him to approach. He remained for some time in doubt; but at length, having satisfied himself that they were not enemies, came galloping up to them. He was a fine, haughty-looking savage, fancifully decorated, and mounted on a high-mettled steed, with gaudy trappings and equipments. It was evident that he was a warrior of some consequence among his tribe. His whole deportment had something in it of barbaric dignity; he felt, perhaps, his temporary superiority in personal array, and in the spirit of his steed, to the poor, ragged, travel-worn trappers, and their half-starved horses. Approaching them with an air of protection, he gave them his hand, and, in the Nez Percé language, invited them to his camp, which was only a few miles distant; where he had plenty to eat, and plenty of horses, and would cheerfully share his good things with them.

His hospitable invitation was joyfully accepted: he lingered but a moment, to give directions by which they might find his camp, and then, wheeling round, and giving the reins to his

mettlesome steed, was soon out of sight. The travellers followed, with gladdened hearts, but at a snail's pace; for their poor horses could scarcely drag one leg after the other. Captain Bonneville, however, experienced a sudden and singular change of feeling. Hitherto, the necessity of conducting his party, and of providing against every emergency, had kept his mind upon the stretch, and his whole system braced and excited. In no one instance had he flagged in spirit, or felt disposed to succumb. Now, however, that all danger was over, and the march of a few miles would bring them to repose and abundance, his energies suddenly deserted him; and every faculty, mental and physical, was totally relaxed. He had not proceeded two miles from the point where he had had the interview with the Nez Percé chief, when he threw himself upon the earth, without the power or will to move a muscle, or exert a thought, and sank almost instantly into a profound and dreamless sleep. His companions again came to a halt, and encamped beside him, and there they passed the night.

The next morning, Captain Bonneville awakened from his long and heavy sleep, much refreshed; and they all resumed their creeping progress. They had not been long on the march, when eight or ten of the Nez Percé tribe came galloping to meet them, leading fresh horses to bear them to their camp. Thus gallantly mounted, they felt new life infused into their languid frames, and dashing forward, were soon at the lodges of the Nez Percés. Here they found about twelve families living together, under the patriarchal sway of an ancient and venerable chief. He received them with the hospitality of the golden age, and with something of the same kind of fare; for, while he opened his arms to make them welcome, the only repast he set before them consisted of roots. They could have wished for something more hearty and substantial; but, for want of better, made a voracious meal on these humble viands. The repast being over, the best pipe was lighted and sent round: and this was a most welcome luxury, having lost their smoking apparatus twelve days before, among the mountains.

While they were thus enjoying themselves, their poor horses were led to the best pastures in the neighbourhood, where they were turned loose to revel on the fresh sprouting grass; so that they had better fare than their masters.

Captain Bonneville soon felt himself quite at home among these quiet, inoffensive people. His long residence among their cousins, the Upper Nez Percés, had made him conversant with their language, modes of expression, and all their habitudes. He soon found, too, that he was well known among them, by report, at least, from the constant interchange of visits and messages between the two branches of the tribe. They at first addressed him by his name; giving him his title of captain, with a French accent: but they soon gave him a title of their own; which, as usual with Indian titles, had a peculiar signification. In the case of the captain it had somewhat of a whimsical origin.

As he sat chatting and smoking in the midst of them, he would occasionally take off his cap. Whenever he did so, there was a sensation in the surrounding circle. The Indians would half rise from their recumbent posture, and gaze upon his uncovered head, with their usual exclamation of astonishment. The worthy captain was completely bald; a phenomenon very surprising in their eyes. They were at a loss to know whether he had been scalped in battle, or enjoyed a natural immunity from that belligerent infliction. In a little while, he became known among them by an Indian name, signifying "the bald chief." "A soubriquet," observes the captain, "for which I can find no parallel in history since the days of 'Charles the Bald.'"

Although the travellers had banqueted on roots, and been regaled with tobacco smoke, yet their stomachs craved more generous fare. In approaching the lodges of the Nez Percés, they had indulged in fond anticipations of venison and dried salmon; and dreams of the kind still haunted their imaginations, and could not be conjured down. The keen appetites of mountain trappers, quickened by a fortnight's fasting, at length got the better of all scruples of pride, and they fairly begged some fish or flesh from the hospitable savages. The latter, however, were slow to break in upon their winter store, which was very limited; but were ready to furnish roots in abundance, which they pronounced excellent food. At length, Captain Bonneville thought of a means of attaining the much-coveted gratification.

He had about him, he says, a trusty plaid; an old and valued travelling companion and comforter; upon which the rains had descended, and the snows and winds beaten, with-

out further effect than somewhat to tarnish its primitive lustre. This coat of many colours had excited the admiration, and inflamed the covetousness of both warriors and squaws, to an extravagant degree. An idea now occurred to Captain Bonneville, to convert this rainbow garment into the savoury viands so much desired. There was a momentary struggle in his mind, between old associations and projected indulgence; and his decision in favour of the latter was made, he says, with a greater promptness, perhaps, than true taste and sentiment might have required. In a few moments, his plaid cloak was cut into numerous strips. "Of these," continues he, "with the newly developed talent of a man-milliner, I speedily constructed turbans *à la Turquie*, and fanciful head-gears of divers conformations. These, judiciously distributed among such of the womenkind as seemed of most consequence and interest in the eyes of the *patres conscripti*, brought us, in a little while, abundance of dried salmon and deers' hearts; on which we made a sumptuous supper. Another, and a more satisfactory smoke, succeeded this repast, and sweet slumbers answering the peaceful invocations of our pipes, wrapped us in that delicious rest which is only won by toil and travail."

As to Captain Bonneville, he slept in the lodge of the venerable patriarch, who had evidently conceived a most disinterested affection for him; as was shown on the following morning. The travellers, invigorated by a good supper, and "fresh from the bath of repose," were about to resume their journey, when this affectionate old chief took the captain aside, to let him know how much he loved him. As a proof of his regard, he had determined to give him a fine horse, which would go further than words, and put his good-will beyond all question. So saying, he made a signal, and forthwith a beautiful young horse, of a brown colour, was led, prancing and snorting, to the place. Captain Bonneville was suitably affected by this mark of friendship; but his experience in what is proverbially called "Indian giving," made him aware that a parting pledge was necessary on his own part, to prove that his friendship was reciprocated. He accordingly placed a handsome rifle in the hands of the venerable chief, whose benevolent heart was evidently touched and gratified by this outward and visible sign of amity.

Having now, as he thought, balanced this little account of friendship, the captain was about to shift his saddle to this

noble gift-horse, when the affectionate patriarch plucked him by the sleeve, and introduced to him a whimpering, whining, leathern-skinned old squaw, that might have passed for an Egyptian mummy, without drying. "This," said he, "is my wife; she is a good wife—I love her very much.—She loves the horse—she loves him a great deal—she will cry very much at losing him.—I do not know how I shall comfort her—and that makes my heart very sore."

What could the worthy captain do, to console the tender-hearted old squaw, and, peradventure, to save the venerable patriarch from a curtain lecture? He bethought himself of a pair of ear-bobs: it was true the patriarch's better-half was of an age and appearance that seemed to put personal vanity out of the question; but when is personal vanity extinct? The moment he produced the glittering ear-bobs, the whimpering and whining of the sempiternal beldame was at an end. She eagerly placed the precious baubles in her ears, and, though as ugly as the Witch of Endor, went off with a sidling gait, and coquettish air, as though she had been a perfect Semiramis.

The captain had now saddled his newly acquired steed, and his foot was in the stirrup, when the affectionate patriarch again stepped forward, and presented to him a young Pierced-nose, who had a peculiarly sulky look. "This," said the venerable chief, "is my son: he is very good; a great horseman—he always took care of this very fine horse—he brought him up from a colt, and made him what he is.—He is very fond of this fine horse—he loves him like a brother—his heart will be very heavy when this fine horse leaves the camp."

What could the captain do, to reward the youthful hope of this venerable pair, and comfort him for the loss of his foster-brother, the horse? He bethought him of a hatchet, which might be spared from his slender stores. No sooner did he place the implement in the hands of young hopeful, than his countenance brightened up, and he went off rejoicing in his hatchet, to the full as much as did his respectable mother in her ear-bobs.

The captain was now in the saddle, and about to start, when the affectionate old patriarch stepped forward, for the third time, and, while he laid one hand gently on the mane of the horse, held up the rifle in the other. "This rifle," said he,

“shall be my great medicine. I will hug it to my heart—I will always love it, for the sake of my good friend, the bald-headed chief.—But a rifle, by itself, is dumb—I cannot make it speak. If I had a little powder and ball, I would take it out with me, and would now and then shoot a deer; and when I brought the meat home to my hungry family, I would say—This was killed by the rifle of my friend, the bald-headed chief, to whom I gave that very fine horse.”

There was no resisting this appeal: the captain, forthwith, furnished the coveted supply of powder and ball; but at the same time, put spurs to his very fine gift-horse, and the first trial of his speed was to get out of all further manifestation of friendship on the part of the affectionate old patriarch and his insinuating family.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FOLLOWING the course of the Immahah, Captain Bonneville and his three companions soon reached the vicinity of Snake River. Their route now lay over a succession of steep and isolated hills, with profound valleys. On the second day, after taking leave of the affectionate old patriarch, as they were descending into one of those deep and abrupt intervals, they descried a smoke, and shortly afterwards came in sight of a small encampment of Nez Percés.

The Indians, when they ascertained that it was a party of white men approaching, greeted them with a salute of firearms, and invited them to encamp. This band was likewise under the sway of a venerable chief named Yo-mus-ro-y-e-cut; a name which we shall be careful not to inflict oftener than is necessary upon the reader. This ancient and hard-named chieftain, welcomed Captain Bonneville to his camp with the same hospitality and loving-kindness that he had experienced from his predecessor. He told the captain that he had often heard of the Americans and their generous deeds, and that his buffalo brethren (the Upper Nez Percés) had always spoken of them as the Big-hearted whites of the East, the very good friends of the Nez Percés.

Captain Bonneville felt somewhat uneasy under the responsibility of this magnanimous but costly appellation; and began to fear he might be involved in a second interchange of

pledges of friendship. He hastened, therefore, to let the old chief know his poverty-stricken state, and how little there was to be expected from him.

He informed him that he and his comrades had long resided among the Upper Nez Percés, and loved them so much, that they had thrown their arms around them, and now held them close to their hearts. That he had received such good accounts from the Upper Nez Percés of their cousins, the Lower Nez Percés, that he had become desirous of knowing them as friends and brothers. That he and his companions had accordingly loaded a mule with presents and set off for the country of the Lower Nez Percés; but, unfortunately, had been entrapped for many days among the snowy mountains; and that the mule with all the presents had fallen into Snake River, and been swept away by the rapid current. That instead, therefore, of arriving among their friends, the Nez Percés, with light hearts and full hands, they came naked, hungry, and broken down; and instead of making them presents, must depend upon them even for food. "But," concluded he, "we are going to the white men's fort on the Wallah-Wallah, and will soon return; and then we will meet our Nez Percé friends like the true Big Hearts of the East."

Whether the hint thrown out in the latter part of the speech had any effect, or whether the old chief acted from the hospitable feelings which, according to the captain, are really inherent in the Nez Percé tribe, he certainly showed no disposition to relax his friendship on learning the destitute circumstances of his guests. On the contrary, he urged the captain to remain with them until the following day, when he would accompany him on his journey, and make him acquainted with all his people. In the meantime, he would have a colt killed, and cut up for travelling provisions. This, he carefully explained, was intended not as an article of traffic, but as a gift; for he saw that his guests were hungry and in need of food.

Captain Bonneville gladly assented to this hospitable arrangement. The carcass of the colt was forthcoming in due season, but the captain insisted that one half of it should be set apart for the use of the chieftain's family.

At an early hour of the following morning, the little party resumed their journey, accompanied by the old chief and an

Indian guide. Their route was over a rugged and broken country; where the hills were slippery with ice and snow. Their horses, too, were so weak and jaded that they could scarcely climb the steep ascents or maintain their foothold on the frozen declivities. Throughout the whole of the journey, the old chief and the guide were unremitting in their good offices, and continually on the alert to select the best roads, and assist them through all difficulties. Indeed, the captain and his comrades had to be dependent on their Indian friends for almost everything, for they had lost their tobacco and pipes, those great comforts of the trapper, and had but a few charges of powder left, which it was necessary to husband for the purpose of lighting their fires.

In the course of the day the old chief had several private consultations with the guide, and showed evident signs of being occupied with some mysterious matter of mighty import. What it was, Captain Bonneville could not fathom, nor did he make much effort to do so. From some casual sentences that he overheard, he perceived that it was something from which the old man promised himself much satisfaction, and to which he attached a little vainglory, but which he wished to keep a secret; so he suffered him to spin out his petty plans unmolested.

In the evening when they encamped, the old chief and his privy councillor, the guide, had another mysterious colloquy, after which the guide mounted his horse and departed on some secret mission, while the chief resumed his seat at the fire, and sat humming to himself in a pleasing but mystic reverie.

The next morning, the travellers descended into the valley of the Way-lee-way, a considerable tributary of Snake River. Here they met the guide returning from his secret errand. Another private conference was held between him and the old managing chief, who now seemed more inflated than ever with mystery and self-importance. Numerous fresh trails, and various other signs, persuaded Captain Bonneville that there must be a considerable village of Nez Percés in the neighbourhood; but as his worthy companion, the old chief, said nothing on the subject, and as it appeared to be in some way connected with his secret operations, he asked no questions, but patiently awaited the development of his mystery.

As they journeyed on, they came to where two or three

Indians were bathing in a small stream. The good old chief immediately came to a halt, and had a long conversation with them, in the course of which he repeated to them the whole history which Captain Bonneville had related to him. In fact, he seems to have been a very sociable, communicative old man; by no means afflicted with that taciturnity generally charged upon the Indians. On the contrary, he was fond of long talks and long smokings, and evidently was proud of his new friend, the bald-headed chief, and took a pleasure in sounding his praises, and setting forth the power and glory of the Big Hearts of the East.

Having disburdened himself of everything he had to relate to his bathing friends, he left them to their aquatic disports, and proceeded onward with the captain and his companions. As they approached the Way-lee-way, however, the communicative old chief met with another and a very different occasion to exert his colloquial powers. On the banks of the river stood an isolated mound covered with grass. He pointed to it with some emotion. "The big heart and the strong arm," said he, "lie buried beneath that sod."

It was, in fact, the grave of one of his friends; a chosen warrior of the tribe; who had been slain on this spot when in pursuit of a war party of Shoshokoes, who had stolen the horses of the village. The enemy bore off his scalp as a trophy; but his friends found his body in this lonely place, and committed it to the earth with ceremonials characteristic of their pious and reverential feelings. They gathered round the grave and mourned; the warriors were silent in their grief; but the women and children bewailed their loss with loud lamentations. "For three days," said the old man, "we performed the solemn dances for the dead, and prayed the Great Spirit that our brother might be happy in the land of brave warriors and hunters. Then we killed at his grave fifteen of our best and strongest horses, to serve him when he should arrive at the happy hunting grounds; and having done all this, we returned sorrowfully to our homes."

While the chief was still talking, an Indian scout came galloping up, and, presenting him with a powder-horn, wheeled round, and was speedily out of sight. The eyes of the old chief now brightened; and all his self-importance returned. His petty mystery was about to explode. Turning to Captain Bonneville, he pointed to a hill hard by, and informed him,

that behind it was a village governed by a little chief, whom he had notified of the approach of the bald-headed chief, and a party of the Big Hearts of the East, and that he was prepared to receive them in becoming style. As, among other ceremonials, he intended to salute them with a discharge of firearms, he had sent the horn of gunpowder that they might return the salute in a manner correspondent to his dignity.

They now proceeded on until they doubled the point of the hill, when the whole population of the village broke upon their view, drawn out in the most imposing style, and arrayed in all their finery. The effect of the whole was wild and fantastic, yet singularly striking. In the front rank were the chiefs and principal warriors, glaringly painted and decorated; behind them were arranged the rest of the people, men, women, and children.

Captain Bonneville and his party advanced slowly, exchanging salutes of firearms. When arrived within a respectful distance, they dismounted. The chiefs then came forward successively, according to their respective characters and consequence, to offer the hand of good-fellowship; each filing off when he had shaken hands, to make way for his successor. Those in the next rank followed in the same order, and so on, until all had given the pledge of friendship. During all this time, the chief, according to custom, took his stand beside the guests. If any of his people advanced whom he judged unworthy of the friendship or confidence of the white men, he motioned them off by a wave of the hand, and they would submissively walk away. When Captain Bonneville turned upon him an inquiring look, he would observe, "he was a bad man," or something quite as concise, and there was an end of the matter.

Mats, poles, and other materials were now brought, and a comfortable lodge was soon erected for the strangers, where they were kept constantly supplied with wood and water, and other necessaries; and all their effects were placed in safe keeping. Their horses, too, were unsaddled, and turned loose to graze, and a guard set to keep watch upon them.

All this being adjusted, they were conducted to the main building or council house of the village, where an ample repast, or rather banquet, was spread, which seemed to realize all the gastronomical dreams that had tantalized them during their long starvation; for here they beheld not merely fish and

roots in abundance, but the flesh of deer and elk, and the choicest pieces of buffalo meat. It is needless to say how vigorously they acquitted themselves on this occasion, and how unnecessary it was for their hosts to practise the usual cramming principle of Indian hospitality.

When the repast was over, a long talk ensued. The chief showed the same curiosity evinced by his tribe generally, to obtain information concerning the United States, of which they knew little but what they derived through their cousins, the Upper Nez Percés; as their traffic is almost exclusively with the British traders of the Hudson's Bay Company. Captain Bonneville did his best to set forth the merits of his nation, and the importance of their friendship to the red men, in which he was ably seconded by his worthy friend, the old chief with the hard name, who did all that he could to glorify the Big Hearts of the East.

The chief, and all present, listened with profound attention, and evidently with great interest; nor were the important facts thus set forth confined to the audience in the lodge; for sentence after sentence was loudly repeated by a crier for the benefit of the whole village.

This custom of promulgating everything by criers is not confined to the Nez Percés, but prevails among many other tribes. It has its advantage where there are no gazettes to publish the news of the day, or to report the proceedings of important meetings. And in fact, reports of this kind, viva voce, made in the hearing of all parties, and liable to be contradicted or corrected on the spot, are more likely to convey accurate information to the public mind, than those circulated through the press. The office of crier is generally filled by some old man, who is good for little else. A village has generally several of these walking newspapers, as they are termed by the whites, who go about proclaiming the news of the day, giving notice of public councils, expeditions, dances, feasts, and other ceremonials, and advertising anything lost. While Captain Bonneville remained among the Nez Percés, if a glove, handkerchief, or anything of similar value, was lost or mislaid, it was carried by the finder to the lodge of the chief, and proclamation was made by one of their criers, for the owner to come and claim his property.

How difficult it is to get at the true character of these wandering tribes of the wilderness! In a recent work, we have

had to speak of this tribe of Indians from the experience of other traders who had casually been among them, and who represented them as selfish, inhospitable, exorbitant in their dealings, and much addicted to thieving*: Captain Bonneville, on the contrary, who resided much among them, and had repeated opportunities of ascertaining their real character, invariably speaks of them as kind and hospitable, scrupulously honest, and remarkable, above all other Indians that he had met with, for a strong feeling of religion. In fact, so enthusiastic is he in their praise, that he pronounces them, all ignorant and barbarous as they are by their condition, one of the purest-hearted people on the face of the earth.

Some cures which Captain Bonneville had effected in simple cases, among the Upper Nez Percés, had reached the ears of their cousins here, and gained for him the reputation of a great medicine man. He had not been long in the village, therefore, before his lodge began to be the resort of the sick and the infirm. The captain felt the value of the reputation thus easily and cheaply acquired, and endeavoured to sustain it. As he had arrived at that age when every man is, experimentally, something of a physician, he was enabled to turn to advantage the little knowledge in the healing art which he had casually picked up; and was sufficiently successful in two or three cases to convince the simple Indians that report had not exaggerated his medical talents. The only patient that effectually baffled his skill, or rather discouraged any attempt at relief, was an antiquated squaw, with a churchyard cough, and one leg in the grave; it being shrunk and rendered useless by a rheumatic affection. This was a case beyond his mark; however he comforted the old woman with a promise that he would endeavour to procure something to relieve her at the fort on the Wallah-Wallah, and would bring it on his return; with which assurance her husband was so well satisfied, that he presented the captain with a colt, to be killed as provisions for the journey: a medical fee which was thankfully accepted.

While among these Indians, Captain Bonneville unexpectedly found an owner for the horse which he had purchased from a Root Digger at the Big Wyer. The Indian satisfactorily proved that the horse had been stolen from him some time previous, by some unknown thief. "However," said the

* Vide Astoria, chap. lii.

considerate savage, "you got him in fair trade—you are more in want of horses than I am: keep him; he is yours—he is a good horse; use him well."

Thus, in the continual experience of acts of kindness and generosity, which his destitute condition did not allow him to reciprocate, Captain Bonneville passed some short time among these good people, more and more impressed with the general excellence of their character.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN resuming his journey, Captain Bonneville was conducted by the same Nez Percé guide, whose knowledge of the country was important in choosing the routes and resting-places. He also continued to be accompanied by the worthy old chief with the hard name, who seemed bent upon doing the honours of the country, and introducing him to every branch of his tribe. The Way-lee-way, down the banks of which Captain Bonneville and his companions were now travelling, is a considerable stream winding through a succession of bold and beautiful scenes. Sometimes the landscape towered into bold and mountainous heights that partook of sublimity; at other times it stretched along the water-side in fresh smiling meadows, and graceful undulating valleys.

Frequently in their route they encountered small parties of the Nez Percés, with whom they invariably stopped to shake hands; and who, generally, evinced great curiosity concerning them and their adventures; a curiosity which never failed to be thoroughly satisfied by the replies of the worthy Yo-mus-ro-y-e-cut, who kindly took upon himself to be spokesman of the party.

The incessant smoking of pipes incident to the long talks of this excellent, but somewhat garrulous old chief, at length exhausted all his stock of tobacco, so that he had no longer a whiff with which to regale his white companions. In this emergency, he cut up the stem of his pipe into fine shavings, which he mixed with certain herbs, and thus manufactured a temporary succedaneum, to enable him to accompany his long colloquies and harangues with the customary fragrant cloud.

If the scenery of the Way-lee-way had charmed the travellers with its mingled amenity and grandeur, that which broke

upon them on once more reaching Snake River, filled them with admiration and astonishment. At times, the river was overhung by dark and stupendous rocks, rising like gigantic walls and battlements; these would be rent by wide and yawning chasms, that seemed to speak of past convulsions of nature. Sometimes the river was of a glassy smoothness and placidity; at other times it roared along in impetuous rapids and foaming cascades. Here, the rocks were piled in the most fantastic crags and precipices; and in another place they were succeeded by delightful valleys, carpeted with greensward. The whole of this wild and varied scenery was dominated by immense mountains rearing their distant peaks into the clouds. "The grandeur and originality of the views, presented on every side," says Captain Bonneville, "beggars both the pencil and the pen. Nothing we had ever gazed upon in any other region could for a moment compare in wild majesty and impressive sternness, with the series of scenes which here at every turn astonished our senses, and filled us with awe and delight."

Indeed, from all that we can gather from the journal before us, and the accounts of other travellers, who passed through these regions in the memorable enterprise of Astoria, we are inclined to think that Snake River must be one of the most remarkable for varied and striking scenery of all the rivers of this continent. From its head waters in the Rocky Mountains, to its junction with the Columbia, its windings are upwards of six hundred miles through every variety of landscape. Rising in a volcanic region, amidst extinguished craters, and mountains awful with the traces of ancient fires, it makes its way through great plains of lava and sandy deserts, penetrates vast sierras or mountainous chains, broken into romantic and often frightful precipices, and crowned with eternal snows; and at other times careers through green and smiling meadows, and wide landscapes of Italian grace and beauty. Wildness and sublimity, however, appear to be its prevailing characteristics.

Captain Bonneville and his companions had pursued their journey a considerable distance down the course of Snake River, when the old chief halted on the bank, and dismounting, recommended that they should turn their horses loose to graze, while he summoned a cousin of his from a group of lodges on the opposite side of the stream. His summons was

quickly answered. An Indian, of an active, elastic form leaped into a light canoe of cotton-wood, and vigorously plying the paddle, soon shot across the river. Bounding on shore, he advanced with a buoyant air and frank demeanour, and gave his right hand to each of the party in turn. The old chief, whose hard name we forbear to repeat, now presented Captain Bonneville in form to his cousin, whose name, we regret to say, was no less hard, being nothing less than Hay-she-in-cow-cow. The latter evinced the usual curiosity to know all about the strangers, whence they came, whither they were going, the object of their journey, and the adventures they had experienced. All these, of course, were amply and eloquently set forth by the communicative old chief. To all his grandiloquent account of the bald-headed chief and his countrymen, the Big Hearts of the East, his cousin listened with great attention, and replied in the customary style of Indian welcome. He then desired the party to await his return, and, springing into his canoe, darted across the river. In a little while he returned, bringing a most welcome supply of tobacco, and a small stock of provisions for the road, declaring his intention of accompanying the party. Having no horse, he mounted behind one of the men, observing that he should procure a steed for himself on the following day.

They all now jogged on very sociably and cheerily together. Not many miles beyond, they met others of the tribe, among whom was one, whom Captain Bonneville and his comrades had known during their residence among the Upper Nez Percés, and who welcomed them with open arms. In this neighbourhood was the home of their guide, who took leave of them with a profusion of good wishes for their safety and happiness. That night they put up in the hut of a Nez Percé, where they were visited by several warriors from the other side of the river, friends of the old chief and his cousin, who came to have a talk and a smoke with the white men. The heart of the good old chief was overflowing with good-will at thus being surrounded by his new and old friends, and he talked with more spirit and vivacity than ever. The evening passed away in perfect harmony and good-humour, and it was not until a late hour that the visitors took their leave, and recrossed the river.

After this constant picture of worth and virtue on the part of the Nez Percé tribe, we grieve to have to record a circum-

stance calculated to throw a temporary shade upon the name. In the course of the social and harmonious evening just mentioned, one of the captain's men, who happened to be something of a virtuoso in his way, and fond of collecting curiosities, produced a small skin, a great rarity in the eyes of men conversant in peltries. It attracted much attention among the visitors from beyond the river, who passed it from one to the other, examined it with looks of lively admiration, and pronounced it a great medicine.

In the morning, when the captain and his party were about to set off, the precious skin was missing. Search was made for it in the hut, but it was nowhere to be found; and it was strongly suspected that it had been purloined by some of the connoisseurs from the other side of the river.

The old chief and his cousin were indignant at the supposed delinquency of their friends across the water, and called out for them to come over and answer for their shameful conduct. The others answered to the call with all the promptitude of perfect innocence, and spurned at the idea of their being capable of such outrage upon any of the Big-hearted nation. All were at a loss on whom to fix the crime of abstracting the invaluable skin, when by chance the eyes of the worthies from beyond the water fell upon an unhappy cur belonging to the owner of the hut. He was a gallows-looking dog, but not more so than most Indian dogs, who, take them in the mass, are little better than a generation of vipers. Be that as it may, he was instantly accused of having devoured the skin in question. A dog accused is generally a dog condemned, and a dog condemned is generally a dog executed. So was it in the present instance. The unfortunate cur was arraigned; his thievish looks substantiated his guilt, and he was condemned by his judges from across the river to be hanged. In vain the Indians of the hut, with whom he was a great favourite, interceded in his behalf. In vain Captain Bonneville and his comrades petitioned that his life might be spared. His judges were inexorable. He was doubly guilty: first, in having robbed their good friends, the Big Hearts of the East; secondly, in having brought a doubt on the honour of the Nez Percé tribe. He was accordingly swung aloft, and pelted with stones, to make his death more certain. The sentence of the judges being thoroughly executed, a post mortem exami-

nation of the body of the dog was held, to establish his delinquency beyond all doubt, and to leave the Nez Percés without a shadow of suspicion. Great interest, of course, was manifested by all present, during this operation. The body of the dog was opened, the intestines rigorously scrutinized, but to the horror of all concerned, not a particle of the skin was to be found—the dog had been unjustly executed!

A great clamour now ensued, but the most clamorous was the party from across the river, whose jealousy of their good name now prompted them to the most vociferous vindications of their innocence. It was with the utmost difficulty that the captain and his comrades could calm their lively sensibilities, by accounting for the disappearance of the skin in a dozen different ways, until all idea of its having been stolen was entirely out of the question.

The meeting now broke up. The warriors returned across the river, the captain and his comrades proceeded on their journey; but the spirits of the communicative old chief, Yo-mus-ro-y-e-cut, were for a time completely damped, and he evinced great mortification at what had just occurred. He rode on in silence, except that now and then he would give way to a burst of indignation, and exclaim, with a shake of the head and a toss of the hand toward the opposite shore,—"bad men, very bad men across the river;" to each of which brief exclamations his worthy cousin, Hay-she-in-cow-cow, would respond by a deep guttural sound of acquiescence, equivalent to an amen.

After some time the countenance of the old chief again cleared up, and he fell into repeated conferences, in an undertone, with his cousin, which ended in the departure of the latter, who, applying the lash to his horse, dashed forward, and was soon out of sight. In fact, they were drawing near to the village of another chief, likewise distinguished by an appellation of some longitude, O-push-y-e-cut; but commonly known as the great chief. The cousin had been sent ahead to give notice of their approach; a herald appeared as before, bearing a powder-horn, to enable them to respond to the intended salute. A scene ensued, on their approach to the village similar to that which had occurred at the village of the little chief. The whole population appeared in the field, drawn up in lines, arrayed with the customary regard to rank

and dignity. Then came on the firing of salutes, and the shaking of hands, in which last ceremonial every individual, man, woman, and child, participated; for the Indians have an idea that it is as indispensable an overture of friendship among the whites as smoking of the pipe is among the red men. The travellers were next ushered to the banquet, where all the choicest viands that the village could furnish were served up in rich profusion. They were afterwards entertained by feats of agility and horse races; indeed, their visit to the village seemed the signal for complete festivity. In the meantime a skin lodge had been spread for their accommodation, their horses and baggage were taken care of, and wood and water supplied in abundance. At night, therefore, they retired to their quarters, to enjoy, as they supposed, the repose of which they stood in need. No such thing, however, was in store for them. A crowd of visitors awaited their appearance, all eager for a smoke and a talk. The pipe was immediately lighted, and constantly replenished and kept alive until the night was far advanced. As usual, the utmost eagerness was evinced by the guests to learn everything within the scope of their comprehension respecting the Americans, for whom they professed the most fraternal regard. The captain, in his replies, made use of familiar illustrations, calculated to strike their minds, and impress them with such an idea of the might of his nation as would induce them to treat with kindness and respect all stragglers that might fall in their path. To their inquiries as to the numbers of the people of the United States, he assured them that they were as countless as the blades of grass in the prairies, and that, great as Snake River was, if they were all encamped upon its banks, they would drink it dry in a single day. To these and similar statistics they listened with profound attention, and, apparently, implicit belief. It was, indeed, a striking scene: the captain, with his hunter's dress and bald head in the midst, holding forth, and his wild auditors seated around like so many statues, the fire lighting up their painted faces and muscular figures, all fixed and motionless, excepting when the pipe was passed, a question propounded, or a startling fact in statistics received with a movement of surprise and a half suppressed ejaculation of wonder and delight.

The fame of the captain as a healer of diseases had accompanied him to this village, and the great chief, O-push-y-e-cut,

now entreated him to exert his skill on his daughter, who had been for three days racked with pains, for which the Pierced-nose doctors could devise no alleviation. The captain found her extended on a pallet of mats in excruciating pain. Her father manifested the strongest paternal affection for her, and assured the captain that if he would but cure her, he would place the Americans near his heart. The worthy captain needed no such inducement. His kind heart was already touched by the sufferings of the poor girl, and his sympathies quickened by her appearance; for she was but about sixteen years of age, and uncommonly beautiful in form and feature. The only difficulty with the captain was, that he knew nothing of her malady, and that his medical science was of the most haphazard kind. After considering and cogitating for some time, as a man is apt to do when in a maze of vague ideas, he made a desperate dash at a remedy. By his directions, the girl was placed in a sort of rude vapour bath, much used by the Nez Percés, where she was kept until near fainting. He then gave her a doze of gunpowder dissolved in cold water, and ordered her to be wrapped in buffalo robes and put to sleep under a load of furs and blankets. The remedy succeeded: the next morning she was free from pain, though extremely languid; whereupon, the captain prescribed for her a bowl of colt's head broth, and that she should be kept for a time on simple diet.

The great chief was unbounded in his expressions of gratitude for the recovery of his daughter. He would fain have detained the captain a long time as his guest, but the time for departure had arrived. When the captain's horse was brought for him to mount, the chief declared that the steed was not worthy of him, and sent for one of his best horses, which he presented in its stead; declaring that it made his heart glad to see his friend so well mounted. He then appointed a young Nez Percé to accompany his guests to the next village, and "to carry his talk" concerning them; and the two parties separated with mutual expressions of kindness and feelings of good-will.

The vapour bath of which we have made mention is in frequent use among the Nez Percé tribe, chiefly for cleanliness. Their sweating-houses, as they call them, are small and close lodges, and the vapour is produced by water poured slowly upon red-hot stones.

On passing the limits of O-push-y-e-cut's domains, the tra-

vellers left the elevated table-lands, and all the wild and romantic scenery which has just been described. They now traversed a gently-undulating country, of such fertility that it excited the rapturous admiration of two of the captain's followers, a Kentuckian and a native of Ohio. They declared that it surpassed any land that they had ever seen, and often explained, what a delight it would be just to run a plough through such a rich and teeming soil, and see it open its bountiful promise before the share.

Another halt and sojourn of a night was made at the village of a chief named He-mim-el-pilp, where similar ceremonies were observed and hospitality experienced, as at the preceding villages. They now pursued a west-south-west course through a beautiful and fertile region, better wooded than most of the tracts through which they had passed. In their progress, they met with several bands of Nez Percés, by whom they were invariably treated with the utmost kindness. Within seven days after leaving the domain of He-mim-el-pilp, they struck the Columbia River at Fort Wallah-Wallah, where they arrived on the 4th of March, 1834.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FORT Wallah-Wallah is a trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company, situated just above the mouth of the river of the same name, and on the left bank of the Columbia. It is built of driftwood, and calculated merely for defence against any attack of the natives. At the time of Captain Bonneville's arrival, the whole garrison mustered but six or eight men; and the post was under the superintendence of Mr. Pambrune, an agent of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The great post and fort of the company, forming the emporium of its trade on the Pacific, is Fort Vancouver; situated on the right bank of the Columbia, about sixty miles from the sea, and just above the mouth of the Wallamut. To this point, the company removed its establishment from Astoria, in 1821, after its coalition with the Northwest Company.

Captain Bonneville and his comrades experienced a polite reception from Mr. Pambrune, the superintendent: for, however hostile the members of the British Company may be

to the enterprises of American traders, they have always manifested great courtesy and hospitality to the traders themselves.

Fort Wallah-Wallah is surrounded by the tribe of the same name, as well as by the Skynses, and the Nez Percés; who bring to it the furs and peltries collected in their hunting expeditions. The Wallah-Wallahs are a degenerate, worn-out tribe. The Nez Percés are the most numerous and tractable of the three tribes just mentioned. Mr. Pambrune informed Captain Bonneville, that he had been at some pains to introduce the Christian religion, in the Roman Catholic form, among them, where it had evidently taken root; but had become altered and modified, to suit their peculiar habits of thought, and motives of action; retaining, however, the principal points of faith, and its entire precepts of morality. The same gentleman had given them a code of laws, to which they conformed with scrupulous fidelity. Polygamy, which once prevailed among them to a great extent, was now rarely indulged. All the crimes denounced by the Christian faith, met with severe punishment among them. Even theft, so venial a crime among the Indians, had recently been punished with hanging, by sentence of a chief.

There certainly appears to be a peculiar susceptibility of moral and religious improvement among this tribe, and they would seem to be one of the very, very few, that have benefited in morals and manners, by an intercourse with white men. The parties which visited them about twenty years previously, in the expedition fitted out by Mr. Astor, complained of their selfishness, their extortion, and their thievish propensities. The very reverse of those qualities prevailed among them during the prolonged sojourns of Captain Bonneville.

The Lower Nez Percés ranged upon the Way-lee-way, Im-mahah, Yenghies, and other of the streams west of the mountains. They hunt the beaver, elk, deer, white bear, and mountain sheep. Beside the flesh of these animals, they use a number of roots for food; some of which would be well worth transplanting and cultivating in the Atlantic States. Among these is the kamash, a sweet root, about the form and size of an onion, and said to be really delicious. The cowish, also, or biscuit root, about the size of a walnut, which they reduce to a very palatable flour; together with the jackap, aisish,

quako, and others ; which they cook by steaming them in the ground.

In August and September, these Indians keep along the rivers, where they catch and dry great quantities of salmon ; which, while they last, are their principal food. In the winter, they congregate in villages formed of comfortable huts, or lodges, covered with mats. They are generally clad in deer skins, or woollens, and extremely well armed. Above all, they are celebrated for owning great numbers of horses ; which they mark, and then suffer to range in droves in their most fertile plains. These horses are principally of the pony breed ; but remarkably stout and long-winded. They are brought in great numbers to the establishments of the Hudson's Bay Company, and sold for a mere trifle.

Such is the account given by Captain Bonneville of the Nez Percés ; who, if not viewed by him with too partial an eye, are certainly among the gentlest, and least barbarous people of these remote wildernesses. They invariably signified to him their earnest wish that an American post might be established among them ; and repeatedly declared that they would trade with Americans, in preference to any other people.

Captain Bonneville had intended to remain some time in this neighbourhood, to form an acquaintance with the natives, and to collect information, and establish connections that might be advantageous in the way of trade. The delays, however, which he had experienced on his journey, obliged him to shorten his sojourn, and to set off as soon as possible, so as to reach the rendezvous at the Portneuf at the appointed time. He had seen enough to convince him that an American trade might be carried on with advantage in this quarter ; and he determined soon to return with a stronger party, more completely fitted for the purpose.

As he stood in need of some supplies for his journey, he applied to purchase them of Mr. Pambrune ; but soon found the difference between being treated as a guest, or as a rival trader. The worthy superintendent, who had extended to him all the genial rites of hospitality, now suddenly assumed a withered-up aspect and demeanour, and observed that, however he might feel disposed to serve him, personally, he felt bound by his duty to the Hudson's Bay Company, to do nothing which should facilitate or encourage the visits of other traders among the Indians in that part of the country. He

endeavoured to dissuade Captain Bonneville from returning through the Blue Mountains; assuring him it would be extremely difficult and dangerous, if not impracticable, at this season of the year; and advised him to accompany Mr. Payette, a leader of the Hudson's Bay Company, who was about to depart with a number of men, by a more circuitous, but safe route, to carry supplies to the Company's agent, resident among the Upper Nez Percés. Captain Bonneville, however, piqued at his having refused to furnish him with supplies, and doubting the sincerity of his advice, determined to return by the more direct route through the mountains; though varying his course, in some respects, from that by which he had come, in consequence of information gathered among the neighbouring Indians.

Accordingly, on the 6th of March, he and his three companions, accompanied by their Nez Percé guides, set out on their return. In the early part of their course, they touched again at several of the Nez Percé villages, where they had experienced such kind treatment on their way down. They were always welcomed with cordiality; and everything was done to cheer them on their journey.

On leaving the Way-lee-way village, they were joined by a Nez Percé, whose society was welcomed on account of the general gratitude and good-will they felt for his tribe. He soon proved a heavy clog upon the little party, being doltish and taciturn, lazy in the extreme, and a huge feeder. His only proof of intellect was in shrewdly avoiding all labour, and availing himself of the toil of others. When on the march, he always lagged behind the rest, leaving to them the task of breaking a way through all difficulties and impediments, and leisurely and lazily jogging along the track, which they had beaten through the snow. At the evening encampment, when others were busy gathering fuel, providing for the horses, and cooking the evening repast, this worthy Sancho of the wilderness would take his seat quietly and cosily by the fire, puffing away at his pipe, and eyeing in silence, but with wistful intensity of gaze, the savoury morsels roasting for supper.

When meal-time arrived, however, then came his season of activity. He no longer hung back, and waited for others to take the lead, but distinguished himself by a brilliancy of onset, and a sustained vigour and duration of attack, that

completely shamed the efforts of his competitors—albeit experienced trenchermen of no mean prowess. Never had they witnessed such power of mastication, and such marvellous capacity of stomach, as in this native and uncultivated gastronome. Having, by repeated and prolonged assaults, at length completely gorged himself, he would wrap himself up, and lie with the torpor of an anaconda; slowly digesting his way on to the next repast.

The gormandizing powers of this worthy were, at first, matters of surprise and merriment to the travellers: but they soon became too serious for a joke, threatening devastation to the fleshpots; and he was regarded askance, at his meals, as a regular kill-crop, destined to waste the substance of the party. Nothing but a sense of the obligations they were under to his nation, induced them to bear with such a guest; but he proceeded, speedily, to relieve them from the weight of these obligations, by eating a receipt in full.

CHAPTER XXXV.

As Captain Bonneville and his men were encamped one evening among the hills near Snake River, seated before their fire, enjoying a hearty supper, they were suddenly surprised by the visit of an uninvited guest. He was a ragged, half-naked Indian hunter, armed with bow and arrows, and had the carcass of a fine buck thrown across his shoulder. Advancing with an alert step, and free and easy air, he threw the buck on the ground, and, without waiting for an invitation, seated himself at their mess, helped himself without ceremony, and chatted to the right and left in the liveliest and most unembarrassed manner. No adroit and veteran dinner hunter of a metropolis could have acquitted himself more knowingly. The travellers were at first completely taken by surprise, and could not but admire the facility with which this ragged cosmopolite made himself at home among them. While they stared he went on, making the most of the good cheer upon which he had so fortunately alighted; and was soon elbow deep in "pot-luck," and greased from the tip of his nose to the back of his ears.

As the company recovered from their surprise, they began to feel annoyed at this intrusion. Their uninvited guest,

unlike the generality of his tribe, was somewhat dirty as well as ragged, and they had no relish for such a messmate. Heaping up, therefore, an abundant portion of the "provant" upon a piece of bark, which served for a dish, they invited him to confine himself thereto, instead of foraging in the general mess.

He complied with the most accommodating spirit imaginable; and went on eating and chatting, and laughing and smearing himself, until his whole countenance shone with grease and good-humour. In the course of his repast, his attention was caught by the figure of the gastronome, who, as usual, was gorging himself in dogged silence. A droll cut of the eye showed either that he knew him of old, or perceived at once his characteristics. He immediately made him the butt of his pleasantries; and cracked off two or three good hits, that caused the sluggish dolt to prick up his ears, and delighted all the company. From this time, the uninvited guest was taken into favour; his jokes began to be relished; his careless, free and easy air, to be considered singularly amusing; and in the end, he was pronounced by the travellers one of the merriest companions and most entertaining vagabonds they had met with in the wilderness.

Supper being over, the redoubtable Shee-wee-she-ouaiter, for such was the simple name by which he announced himself, declared his intention of keeping company with the party for a day or two, if they had no objection: and, by way of backing his self-invitation, presented the carcass of the buck as an earnest of his hunting abilities. By this time he had so completely effaced the unfavourable impression made by his first appearance, that he was made welcome to the camp, and the Nez Percé guide undertook to give him lodging for the night. The next morning, at break of day, he borrowed a gun, and was off among the hills, nor was anything more seen of him until a few minutes after the party had encamped for the evening, when he again made his appearance, in his usual frank, careless manner, and threw down the carcass of another noble deer, which he had borne on his back for a considerable distance.

This evening he was the life of the party, and his open communicative disposition, free from all disguise, soon put them in possession of his history. He had been a kind of prodigal son in his native village; living a loose, heedless

life, and disregarding the precepts and imperative commands of the chiefs. He had, in consequence, been expelled from the village, but, nowise disheartened at this banishment, had betaken himself to the society of the border Indians, and had led a careless, haphazard, vagabond life, perfectly consonant to his humours; heedless of the future, so long as he had wherewithal for the present; and fearing no lack of food, so long as he had the implements of the chase, and a fair hunting ground.

Finding him very expert as a hunter, and being pleased with his eccentricities, and his strange and merry humour, Captain Bonneville fitted him out handsomely as the Nimrod of the party, who all soon became quite attached to him. One of the earliest and most signal services he performed, was to exorcise the insatiate kill-crop that had hitherto oppressed the party. In fact, the doltish Nez Percé, who had seemed so perfectly insensible to rough treatment of every kind, by which the travellers had endeavoured to elbow him out of their society, could not withstand the good-humoured bantering, and occasionally sharp wit of She-wee-she. He evidently quailed under his jokes, and sat blinking like an owl in day-light, when pestered by the flouts and peckings of mischievous birds. At length his place was found vacant at meal-time; no one knew when he went off, or whither he had gone, but he was seen no more, and the vast surplus that remained when the repast was over, showed what a mighty gormandizer had departed.

Relieved from this incubus, the little party now went on cheerily. She-wee-she kept them in fun as well as food. His hunting was always successful; he was ever ready to render any assistance in the camp or on the march; while his jokes, his antics, and the very cut of his countenance, so full of whim and comicality, kept every one in good-humour.

In this way they journeyed on until they arrived on the banks of the Immahah, and encamped near to the Nez Percé lodges. Here She-wee-she took a sudden notion to visit his people, and show off the state of worldly prosperity to which he had so suddenly attained. He accordingly departed in the morning, arrayed in hunter's style, and well appointed with everything befitting his vocation. The buoyancy of his gait, the elasticity of his step, and the hilarity of his countenance, showed that he anticipated, with chuckling satis-

faction, the surprise he was about to give those who had ejected him from their society in rags. But what a change was there in his whole appearance when he rejoined the party in the evening! He came skulking into camp like a beaten cur with his tail between his legs. All his finery was gone; he was naked as when he was born, with the exception of a scanty flap that answered the purpose of a fig leaf. His fellow-travellers at first did not know him, but supposed it to be some vagrant Root Digger sneaking into the camp; but when they recognised in this forlorn object their prime wag, She-wee-she, whom they had seen depart in the morning in such high glee and high feather, they could not contain their merriment, but hailed him with loud and repeated peals of laughter,

She-wee-she was not of a spirit to be easily cast down; he soon joined in the merriment as heartily as any one, and seemed to consider his reverse of fortune an excellent joke. Captain Bonneville, however, thought proper to check his good-humour, and demanded, with some degree of sternness, the cause of his altered condition. He replied in the most natural and self-complacent style imaginable, "that he had been among his cousins, who were very poor; they had been delighted to see him; still more delighted with his good fortune; they had taken him to their arms; admired his equipments; one had begged for this; another for that"—in fine, what with the poor devil's inherent heedlessness, and the real generosity of his disposition, his needy cousins had succeeded in stripping him of all his clothes and accoutrements, excepting the fig leaf with which he had returned to camp.

Seeing his total want of care and forethought, Captain Bonneville determined to let him suffer a little, in hopes it might prove a salutary lesson; and, at any rate, to make him no more presents while in the neighbourhood of his needy cousins. He was left, therefore, to shift for himself in his naked condition; which, however, did not seem to give him any concern, or to abate one jot of his good-humour. In the course of his lounging about the camp, however, he got possession of a deer skin; whereupon, cutting a slit in the middle, he thrust his head through it, so that the two ends hung down before and behind, something like a South American poncho, or the tabard of a herald. These ends he tied together, under the armpits; and thus arrayed, presented

himself once more before the captain, with an air of perfect self-satisfaction, as though he thought it impossible for any fault to be found with his toilet.

A little further journeying brought the travellers to the petty village of Nez Percés, governed by the worthy and affectionate old patriarch who had made Captain Bonneville the costly present of a very fine horse. The old man welcomed them once more to his village with his usual cordiality, and his respectable squaw and hopeful son, cherishing grateful recollections of the hatchet and ear-bobs, joined in a chorus of friendly gratulation.

As the much-vaunted steed, once the joy and pride of this interesting family, was now nearly knocked up by travelling, and totally inadequate to the mountain scramble that lay ahead, Captain Bonneville restored him to the venerable patriarch, with renewed acknowledgments for the invaluable gift. Somewhat to his surprise, he was immediately supplied with a fine two years' old colt in his stead, a substitution which, he afterwards learnt, according to Indian custom in such cases, he might have claimed as a matter of right. We do not find that any after claims were made on account of this colt. This donation may be regarded, therefore, as a signal punctilio of Indian honour; but it will be found that the animal soon proved an unlucky acquisition to the party.

While at this village, the Nez Percé guide had held consultations with some of the inhabitants as to the mountain tract the party were about to traverse. He now began to wear an anxious aspect, and to indulge in gloomy forebodings. The snow, he had been told, lay to a great depth in the passes of the mountains, and difficulties would increase as he proceeded. He begged Captain Bonneville, therefore, to travel very slowly, so as to keep the horses in strength and spirit for the hard times they would have to encounter. The captain surrendered the regulation of the march entirely to his discretion, and pushed on in the advance, amusing himself with hunting, so as generally to kill a deer or two in the course of the day, and arriving, before the rest of the party, at the spot designated by the guide for the evening's encampment.

In the meantime, the others plodded on at the heels of the guide, accompanied by that merry vagabond, She-wee-shee. The primitive garb worn by this droll, left all his nether man exposed to the biting blasts of the mountains. Still his wit

was never frozen, nor his sunshiny temper beclouded; and his innumerable antics and practical jokes, while they quickened the circulation of his own blood, kept his companions in high good humour.

So passed the first day after the departure from the patriarch's. The second day commenced in the same manner; the captain in the advance, the rest of the party following on slowly. She-wee-shee, for the greater part of the time, trudged on foot over the snow, keeping himself warm by hard exercise, and all kinds of crazy capers. In the height of his foolery, the patriarchal colt, which, unbroken to the saddle, was suffered to follow on at large, happened to come within his reach. In a moment, he was on his back, snapping his fingers, and yelping with delight. The colt, unused to such a burden, and half wild by nature, fell to prancing and rearing and snorting and plunging and kicking; and, at length, set off full speed over the most dangerous ground. As the route led generally along the steep and craggy sides of the hills, both horse and horseman were constantly in danger, and more than once had a hairbreadth escape from deadly peril. Nothing, however, could daunt this madcap savage. He stuck to the colt like a plaister, up ridges, down gullies; whooping and yelling with the wildest glee. Never did beggar on horseback display more headlong horsemanship. His companions followed him with their eyes, sometimes laughing, sometimes holding in their breath at his vagaries, until they saw the colt make a sudden plunge or start, and pitch his unlucky rider headlong over a precipice. There was a general cry of horror, and all hastened to the spot. They found the poor fellow lying among the rocks below, sadly bruised and mangled. It was almost a miracle that he had escaped with life. Even in this condition, his merry spirit was not entirely quelled, and he summoned up a feeble laugh at the alarm and anxiety of those who came to his relief. He was extricated from his rocky bed, and a messenger dispatched to inform Captain Bonneville of the accident. The latter returned with all speed, and encamped the party at the first convenient spot. Here the wounded man was stretched upon buffalo skins, and the captain, who officiated on all occasions as doctor and surgeon to the party, proceeded to examine his wounds. The principal one was a long and deep gash in the thigh, which reached to the bone. Calling for a needle and

thread, the captain now prepared to sew up the wound, admonishing the patient to submit to the operation with becoming fortitude. His gaiety was at an end; he could no longer summon up even a forced smile; and, at the first puncture of the needle, flinched so piteously, that the captain was obliged to pause, and to order him a powerful dose of alcohol. This somewhat rallied up his spirit and warmed his heart; all the time of the operation, however, he kept his eyes riveted on the wound, with his teeth set, and a whimsical wincing of the countenance, that occasionally gave his nose something of its usual comic curl.

When the wound was fairly closed, the captain washed it with rum, and administered a second dose of the same to the patient, who was tucked in for the night, and advised to compose himself to sleep. He was restless and uneasy, however, repeatedly expressing his fears that his leg would be so much swollen the next day, as to prevent his proceeding with the party; nor could he be quieted, until the captain gave a decided opinion favourable to his wishes.

Early the next morning, a gleam of his merry humour returned, on finding that his wounded limb retained its natural proportions. On attempting to use it, however, he found himself unable to stand. He made several efforts to coax himself into a belief that he might still continue forward; but at length, shook his head despondingly, and said, that "as he had but one leg," it was all in vain to attempt a passage of the mountain.

Every one grieved to part with so boon a companion, and under such disastrous circumstances. He was once more clothed and equipped, each one making him some parting present. He was then helped on a horse, which Captain Bonneville presented to him; and after many parting expressions of good-will on both sides, set off on his return to his old haunts; doubtless, to be once more plucked by his affectionate but needy cousins.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONTINUING their journey up the course of the Immahah, the travellers found, as they approached the head waters, the snow increased in quantity, so as to lie two feet deep. They

were again obliged, therefore, to beat down a path for their horses, sometimes travelling on the icy surface of the stream. At length they reached the place where they intended to scale the mountain; and, having broken a pathway to the foot, were agreeably surprised to find that the wind had drifted the snow from off the side, so that they attained the summit with but little difficulty. Here they encamped, with the intention of beating a track through the mountains. A short experiment, however, obliged them to give up the attempt, the snow lying in vast drifts, often higher than the horses' heads.

Captain Bonneville now took the two Indian guides, and set out to reconnoitre the neighbourhood. Observing a high peak which overtopped the rest, he climbed it, and discovered from the summit a pass about nine miles long, but so heavily piled with snow, that it seemed impracticable. He now lit a pipe, and, sitting down with the two guides, proceeded to hold a consultation after the Indian mode. For a long while they all smoked vigorously and in silence, pondering over the subject matter before them. At length a discussion commenced, and the opinion in which the two guides concurred, was, that the horses could not possibly cross the snows. They advised, therefore, that the party should proceed on foot, and they should take the horses back to the village, where they would be well taken care of until Captain Bonneville should send for them. They urged this advice with great earnestness; declaring that their chief would be extremely angry, and treat them severely, should any of the horses of his good friends, the white men, be lost, in crossing under their guidance; and that, therefore, it was good they should not attempt it.

Captain Bonneville sat smoking his pipe, and listening to them with Indian silence and gravity. When they had finished, he replied to them in their own style of language.

"My friends," said he, "I have seen the pass, and have listened to your words; you have little hearts. When troubles and dangers lie in your way, you turn your backs. That is not the way with my nation. When great obstacles present, and threaten to keep them back, their hearts swell, and they push forward. They love to conquer difficulties. But enough for the present. Night is coming on; let us return to our camp."

He moved on, and they followed in silence. On reaching the camp, he found the men extremely discouraged. One of their number had been surveying the neighbourhood, and

seriously assured them, that the snow was at least a hundred feet deep. The captain cheered them up, and diffused fresh spirit in them by his example. Still he was much perplexed how to proceed. About dark there was a slight drizzling rain. An expedient now suggested itself. This was to make two light sleds, place the packs on them, and drag them to the other side of the mountain, thus forming a road in the wet snow, which, should it afterwards freeze, would be sufficiently hard to bear the horses. This plan was promptly put into execution; the sleds were constructed, the heavy baggage was drawn backward and forward until the road was beaten, when they desisted from their fatiguing labour. The night turned out clear and cold, and by morning their road was incrustated with ice sufficiently strong for their purpose. They now set out on their icy turnpike, and got on well enough, excepting that now and then a horse would sidle out of the track, and immediately sink up to the neck. Then came on toil and difficulty, and they would be obliged to haul up the floundering animal with ropes. One, more unlucky than the rest, after repeated falls, had to be abandoned in the snow. Notwithstanding these repeated delays, they succeeded, before the sun had acquired sufficient power to thaw the snow, in getting all the rest of their horses safely to the other side of the mountain.

Their difficulties and dangers, however, were not yet at an end. They had now to descend, and the whole surface of the snow was glazed with ice. It was necessary, therefore, to wait until the warmth of the sun should melt the glassy crust of sleet, and give them a foothold in the yielding snow. They had a frightful warning of the danger of any movement while the sleet remained. A wild young mare, in her restlessness, strayed to the edge of a declivity. One slip was fatal to her; she lost her balance, careered with headlong velocity down the slippery side of the mountain for more than two thousand feet, and was dashed to pieces at the bottom. When the travellers afterwards sought the carcass to cut it up for food, they found it torn and mangled in the most horrible manner.

It was quite late in the evening before the party descended to the ultimate skirts of the snow. Here they planted large logs below them to prevent their sliding down, and encamped for the night. The next day they succeeded in bringing

were again obliged, therefore, to beat down a path for their horses, sometimes travelling on the icy surface of the stream. At length they reached the place where they intended to scale the mountain; and, having broken a pathway to the foot, were agreeably surprised to find that the wind had drifted the snow from off the side, so that they attained the summit with but little difficulty. Here they encamped, with the intention of beating a track through the mountains. A short experiment, however, obliged them to give up the attempt, the snow lying in vast drifts, often higher than the horses' heads.

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It was quite late in the evening before the party descended to the ultimate skirts of the snow. Here they planted large logs below them to prevent their sliding down, and encamped for the night. The next day they succeeded in bringing

down their baggage to the encampment; then packing all up regularly, and loading their horses, they once more set out briskly and cheerfully, and in the course of the following day succeeded in getting to a grassy region.

Here their Nez Percé guides declared that all the difficulties of the mountains were at an end, and their course was plain and simple, and needed no further guidance; they asked leave, therefore, to return home. This was readily granted, with many thanks and presents for their faithful services. They took a long farewell smoke with their white friends, after which, they mounted their horses and set off, exchanging many farewells and kind wishes.

On the following day, Captain Bonneville completed his journey down the mountain, and encamped on the borders of Snake River, where he found the grass in great abundance and eight inches in height. In this neighbourhood, he saw on the rocky banks of the river several prismoids of basaltes, rising to the height of fifty or sixty feet.

Nothing particularly worthy of note occurred during several days as the party proceeded up along Snake River and across its tributary streams. After crossing Gun Creek, they met with various signs that white people were in the neighbourhood, and Captain Bonneville made earnest exertions to discover whether they were any of his own people, that he might join them. He soon ascertained that they had been starved out of this tract of country, and had betaken themselves to the buffalo region, whither he now shaped his course. In proceeding along Snake River, he found small hordes of Shoshonies lingering upon the minor streams, and living upon trout and other fish, which they catch in great numbers at this season in fish-traps. The greater part of the tribe, however, had penetrated the mountains to hunt the elk, deer, and ahsahta or bighorn.

On the 12th of May, Captain Bonneville reached the Portneuf River, in the vicinity of which he had left the winter encampment of his company on the preceding Christmas day. He had then expected to be back by the beginning of March, but circumstances had detained him upwards of two months beyond the time, and the winter encampment must long ere this have been broken up. Halting on the banks of the Portneuf, he dispatched scouts a few miles above, to visit the old camping ground and search for signals of the

party, or of their whereabouts, should they actually have abandoned the spot. They returned without being able to ascertain anything.

Being now destitute of provisions, the travellers found it necessary to make a short hunting excursion after buffalo. They made caches, therefore, in an island in the river, in which they deposited all their baggage, and then set out on their expedition. They were so fortunate as to kill a couple of fine bulls, and, cutting up the carcasses, determined to husband this stock of provisions with the most miserly care, lest they should again be obliged to venture into the open and dangerous hunting grounds. Returning to their island on the 18th of May, they found that the wolves had been at the caches, scratched up the contents, and scattered them in every direction. They now constructed a more secure one, in which they deposited their heaviest articles, and then descended Snake River again, and encamped just above the American Falls. Here they proceeded to fortify themselves, intending to remain here, and give their horses an opportunity to recruit their strength with good pasturage, until it should be time to set out for the annual rendezvous in Bear River valley.

On the 1st of June they descried four men on the other side of the river, opposite to the camp, and, having attracted their attention by a discharge of rifles, ascertained to their joy that they were some of their own people. From these men Captain Bonneville learnt that the whole party which he had left in the preceding month of December were encamped on Blackfoot River, a tributary of Snake River, not very far above the Portneuf. Thither he proceeded with all possible dispatch, and in a little while had the pleasure of finding himself once more surrounded by his people, who greeted his return among them in the heartiest manner; for his long-protracted absence had convinced them that he and his three companions had been cut off by some hostile tribe.

The party had suffered much during his absence. They had been pinched by famine and almost starved, and had been forced to repair to the caches at Salmon River. Here they fell in with the Blackfeet bands, and considered themselves fortunate in being able to retreat from the dangerous neighbourhood without sustaining any loss.

Being thus reunited, a general treat from Captain Bonneville to his men was a matter of course. Two days, therefore, were given up to such feasting and merriment as their means

and situation afforded. What was wanting in good cheer was made up in good-will; the free trappers in particular, distinguished themselves on the occasion, and the saturnalia was enjoyed with a hearty holiday spirit, that smacked of the game flavour of the wilderness.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AFTER the two days of festive indulgence, Captain Bonneville broke up the encampment, and set out with his motley crew of hired and free trappers, half-breeds, Indians, and squaws, for the main rendezvous in Bear River valley. Directing his course up the Blackfoot River, he soon reached the hills among which it takes its rise. Here, while on the march, he descried from the brow of a hill, a war party of about sixty Blackfeet, on the plain immediately below him. His situation was perilous; for the greater part of his people were dispersed in various directions. Still, to betray hesitation or fear, would be to discover his actual weakness, and to invite attack. He assumed, instantly, therefore, a belligerent tone; ordered the squaws to lead the horses to a small grove of ashen trees, and unload and tie them; and caused a great bustle to be made by his scanty handful; the leaders riding hither and thither, and vociferating with all their might, as if a numerous force were getting under way for an attack.

To keep up the deception as to his force, he ordered, at night, a number of extra fires to be made in his camp, and kept up a vigilant watch. His men were all directed to keep themselves prepared for instant action. In such cases the experienced trapper sleeps in his clothes, with his rifle beside him, the shot-belt and powder-flask on the stock; so that, in case of alarm, he can lay his hand upon the whole of his equipment at once, and start up, completely armed.

Captain Bonneville was also especially careful to secure the horses, and set a vigilant guard upon them; for there lies the great object and principal danger of a night attack. The grand move of the lurking savage is to cause a panic among the horses. In such cases, one horse frightens another, until all are alarmed, and struggle to break loose. In camps where there are great numbers of Indians, with their horses, a night alarm of the kind is tremendous. The running of the horses that have broken loose; the snorting, stamping, and rearing

of those which remain fast; the howling of dogs; the yelling of Indians; the scampering of white men, and red men, with their guns; the overturning of lodges, and trampling of fires by the horses; the flashes of the fires, lighting up forms of men and steeds dashing through the gloom, altogether make up one of the wildest scenes of confusion imaginable. In this way, sometimes, all the horses of a camp, amounting to several hundred, will be frightened off in a single night.

The night passed off without any disturbance; but there was no likelihood that a war-party of Blackfeet, once on the track of a camp where there was a chance for spoils, would fail to hover round it. The captain, therefore, continued to maintain the most vigilant precautions; throwing out scouts in the advance, and on every rising ground.

In the course of the day he arrived at the plain of white clay, already mentioned, surrounded by the mineral springs, called Beer Springs by the trappers*. Here the men all halted to have a regale. In a few moments every spring had its jovial knot of hard drinkers, with tin cup in hand, indulging in a mock carousal; quaffing, pledging, toasting, bandying jokes, singing drinking songs, and uttering peals of laughter, until it seemed as if their imaginations had given potency to the beverage, and cheated them into a fit of intoxication. Indeed, in the excitement of the moment, they were loud and extravagant in their commendations of "the mountain tap;" elevating it above every beverage produced from hops or malt. It was a singular and fantastic scene; suited to a region where everything is strange and peculiar:—these groups of trappers, and hunters, and Indians, with their wild costumes, and wilder countenances; their boisterous gaiety, and reckless air; quaffing, and making merry round these sparkling fountains; while beside them lay their weapons,

* In a manuscript journal of Mr. Nathaniel G. Wyeth, we find the following mention of this watering-place:—

"There is here a soda spring; or, I may say, fifty of them. These springs throw out lime, which deposits and forms little hillocks of a yellowish-coloured stone. There is also here a warm spring, which throws out water with a jet, which is like bilge-water in taste. There are also here peat beds, which sometimes take fire, and leave behind a deep, light ashes; in which animals sink deep. . . . I ascended a mountain, and from it could see that Bear River took a short turn round Sheep Rock. There were in the plain many hundred mounds of yellowish stone, with a crater on the top, formed of the deposits of the impregnated water."

ready to be snatched up for instant service. Painters are fond of representing banditti at their rude and picturesque carousals; but here were groups still more rude and picturesque; and it needed but a sudden onset of Blackfeet, and a quick transition from a fantastic revel to a furious *melée*, to have rendered this picture of a trapper's life complete.

The beer frolic, however, passed off without any untoward circumstance; and, unlike most drinking bouts, left neither headache nor heartache behind. Captain Bonneville now directed his course up along Bear River; amusing himself, occasionally, with hunting the buffalo, with which the country was covered. Sometimes, when he saw a huge bull taking his repose in a prairie, he would steal along a ravine, until close upon him; then rouse him from his meditations with a pebble, and take a shot at him as he started up. Such is the quickness with which this animal springs upon his legs, that it is not easy to discover the muscular process by which it is effected. The horse rises first upon his fore legs; and the domestic cow, upon her hinder limbs; but the buffalo bounds at once from a couchant to an erect position, with a celerity that baffles the eye. Though from his bulk, and rolling gait, he does not appear to run with much swiftness; yet, it takes a stanch horse to overtake him, when at full speed on level ground; and a buffalo cow is still fleeter in her motion.

Among the Indians and half-breeds of the party were several admirable horsemen and bold hunters, who amused themselves with a grotesque kind of buffalo bait. Whenever they found a huge bull in the plains, they prepared for their teasing and barbarous sport. Surrounding him on horseback, they would discharge their arrows at him in quick succession, goading him to make an attack; which, with a dexterous movement of the horse, they would easily avoid. In this way, they hovered round him, feathering him with arrows, as he reared and plunged about, until he was bristled all over like a porcupine. When they perceived in him signs of exhaustion, and he could no longer be provoked to make battle, they would dismount from their horses, approach him in the rear, and seizing him by the tail, jerk him from side to side, and drag him backwards; until the frantic animal, gathering fresh strength from fury, would break from them, and rush, with flashing eyes and a hoarse bellowing, upon any enemy in sight; but in a little while, his transient excitement at an

end, would pitch headlong on the ground, and expire. The arrows were then plucked forth, the tongue cut out and preserved as a dainty, and the carcass left a banquet for the wolves.

Pursuing his course up Bear River, Captain Bonneville arrived, on the 13th of June, at the Little Snake Lake; where he encamped for four or five days, that he might examine its shores and outlets. The latter he found extremely muddy, and so surrounded by swamps and quagmires, that he was obliged to construct canoes of rushes, with which to explore them. The mouths of all the streams which fall into this lake from the west are marshy and inconsiderable; but on the east side, there is a beautiful beach, broken, occasionally, by high and isolated bluffs, which advance upon the lake, and heighten the character of the scenery. The water is very shallow, but abounds with trout, and other small fish.

Having finished his survey of the lake, Captain Bonneville proceeded on his journey, until on the banks of the Bear River, some distance higher up, he came upon the party which he had detached a year before, to circumambulate the Great Salt Lake, and ascertain its extent, and the nature of its shores. They had been encamped here about twenty days; and were greatly rejoiced at meeting once more with their comrades, from whom they had so long been separated. The first inquiry of Captain Bonneville was about the result of their journey, and the information they had procured as to the Great Salt Lake; the object of his intense curiosity and ambition. The substance of their report will be found in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

It was on the 24th of July, in the preceding year (1833), that the brigade of forty men set out from Green River valley, to explore the Great Salt Lake. They were to make the complete circuit of it, trapping on all the streams which should fall in their way, and to keep journals and make charts, calculated to impart a knowledge of the lake and the surrounding country. All the resources of Captain Bonneville had been tasked to fit out this favourite expedition. The country lying

to the south-west of the mountains, and ranging down to California, was as yet almost unknown; being out of the buffalo range, it was untraversed by the trapper, who preferred those parts of the wilderness where the roaming herds of that species of animal gave him comparatively an abundant and luxurious life. Still it was said the deer, the elk, and the bighorn were to be found there, so that, with a little diligence and economy, there was no danger of lacking food. As a precaution, however, the party halted on Bear River and hunted for a few days, until they had laid in a supply of dried buffalo meat and venison; they then passed by the head waters of the Cassie River, and soon found themselves launched on an immense sandy desert. Southwardly, on their left, they beheld the Great Salt Lake, spread out like a sea, but they found no stream running into it. A desert extended around them, and stretched to the south-west, as far as the eye could reach, rivalling the deserts of Asia and Africa in sterility. There was neither tree, nor herbage, nor spring, nor pool, nor running stream, nothing but parched wastes of sand, where horse and rider were in danger of perishing.

Their sufferings, at length, became so great that they abandoned their intended course, and made towards a range of snowy mountains, brightening in the north, where they hoped to find water. After a time, they came upon a small stream leading directly towards these mountains. Having quenched their burning thirst, and refreshed themselves and their weary horses for a time, they kept along this stream, which gradually increased in size, being fed by numerous brooks. After approaching the mountains, it took a sweep towards the south-west, and the travellers still kept along it, trapping beaver as they went, on the flesh of which they subsisted for the present, husbanding their dried meat for future necessities.

The stream on which they had thus fallen is called by some, Mary River, but is more generally known as Ogden's River, from Mr. Peter Ogden, an enterprising and intrepid leader of the Hudson's Bay Company, who first explored it. The wild and half-desert region through which the travellers were passing is wandered over by hordes of Shoshokoes, or Root Diggers, the forlorn branch of the Snake tribe. They are a shy people, prone to keep aloof from the stranger. The travellers frequently met with their trails, and saw the smoke of their fires rising in various parts of the vast landscape, so that

they knew there were great numbers in the neighbourhood, but scarcely ever were any of them to be met with.

After a time, they began to have vexatious proofs that, if the Shoshokoes were quiet by day, they were busy at night. The camp was dogged by these eavesdroppers; scarce a morning, but various articles were missing, yet nothing could be seen of the marauders. What particularly exasperated the hunters, was to have their traps stolen from the streams. One morning, a trapper of a violent and savage character, discovering that his traps had been carried off in the night, took a horrid oath to kill the first Indian he should meet, innocent or guilty. As he was returning with his comrades to camp, he beheld two unfortunate Diggers, seated on the river bank, fishing. Advancing upon them, he levelled his rifle, shot one upon the spot, and flung his bleeding body into the stream. The other Indian fled, and was suffered to escape. Such is the indifference with which such acts of violence are regarded in the wilderness, and such the immunity an armed ruffian enjoys beyond the barriers of the laws, that the only punishment this desperado met with, was a rebuke from the leader of the party.

The trappers now left the scene of this infamous tragedy, and kept on westward, down the course of the river, which wound along with a range of mountains on the right hand, and a sandy, but somewhat fertile plain, on the left. As they proceeded, they beheld columns of smoke rising, as before, in various directions, which their guilty consciences now converted into alarm signals, to arouse the country and collect the scattered bands for vengeance.

After a time, the natives began to make their appearance, and sometimes in considerable numbers, but always pacific; the trappers, however, suspected them of deep-laid plans to draw them into ambuscades; to crowd into and get possession of their camp, and various other crafty and daring conspiracies, which, it is probable, never entered into the heads of the poor savages. In fact, they are a simple, timid, inoffensive race, unpractised in warfare, and scarce provided with any weapons, excepting for the chase. Their lives are passed in the great sand plains and along the adjacent rivers; they subsist sometimes on fish, at other times on roots and the seeds of a plant, called the cat's-tail. They are of the same kind of people that Captain Bonneville found upon Snake River, and whom he found so mild and inoffensive.

The trappers, however, had persuaded themselves that they were making their way through a hostile country, and that implacable foes hung round their camp or beset their path, watching for an opportunity to surprise them. At length, one day they came to the banks of a stream emptying into Ogden's River, which they were obliged to ford. Here a great number of Shoshokoes were posted on the opposite bank. Persuaded they were there with hostile intent, they advanced upon them, levelled their rifles, and killed twenty-five of them upon the spot. The rest fled to a short distance, then halted and turned about, howling and whining like wolves, and uttering the most piteous wailings. The trappers chased them in every direction; the poor wretches made no defence, but fled with terror; neither does it appear from the accounts of the boasted victors, that a weapon had been wielded or a weapon launched by the Indians throughout the affair. We feel perfectly convinced that the poor savages had no hostile intention, but had merely gathered together through motives of curiosity, as others of their tribe had done when Captain Bonneville and his companions passed along Snake River.

The trappers continued down Ogden's River, until they ascertained that it lost itself in a great swampy lake, to which there was no apparent discharge. They then struck directly westward, across the great chain of Californian mountains intervening between these interior plains and the shores of the Pacific.

For three and twenty days they were entangled among these mountains, the peaks and ridges of which are in many places covered with perpetual snow. Their passes and defiles present the wildest scenery, partaking of the sublime rather than the beautiful, and abounding with frightful precipices. The sufferings of the travellers among these savage mountains were extreme: for a part of the time they were nearly starved; at length, they made their way through them, and came down upon the plains of New California, a fertile region extending along the coast, with magnificent forests, verdant savannas, and prairies that look like stately parks. Here they found deer and other game in abundance, and indemnified themselves for past famine. They now turned towards the south, and passing numerous small bands of natives, posted upon various streams, arrived at the Spanish village and post of Monterey.

This is a small place, containing about two hundred houses,

situated in latitude 37° north. It has a capacious bay, with indifferent anchorage. The surrounding country is extremely fertile, especially in the valleys; the soil is richer, the further you penetrate into the interior, and the climate is described as a perpetual spring. Indeed, all California, extending along the Pacific Ocean from latitude $19^{\circ} 30'$ to 42° north, is represented as one of the most fertile and beautiful regions in North America.

Lower California, in length about seven hundred miles, forms a great peninsula, which crosses the tropics and terminates in the torrid zone. It is separated from the mainland by the Gulf of California, sometimes called the Vermilion Sea; into this gulf empties the Colorado of the West, the Seeds-ke-dee, or Green River, as it is also sometimes called. The peninsula is traversed by stern and barren mountains, and has many sandy plains, where the only signs of vegetation is the cylindrical cactus growing among the clefts of the rocks. Wherever there is water, however, and vegetable mould, the ardent nature of the climate quickens everything into astonishing fertility. There are valleys luxuriant with the rich and beautiful productions of the tropics. There the sugar-cane and indigo plant attain a perfection unequalled in any other part of North America. There flourish the olive, the fig, the date, the orange, the citron, the pomegranate, and other fruits belonging to the voluptuous climates of the south; with grapes in abundance, that yield a generous wine. In the interior are salt plains; silver mines and scanty veins of gold are said likewise to exist, and pearls of a beautiful water are to be fished upon the coast.

The peninsula of California was settled in 1698 by the Jesuits, who certainly, as far as the natives were concerned, have generally proved the most beneficent of colonists. In the present instance they gained and maintained a footing in the country without the aid of military force, but solely by religious influence. They formed a treaty, and entered into the most amicable relations with the natives, then numbering from twenty-five to thirty thousand souls, and gained a hold upon their affections, and a control over their minds, that effected a complete change in their condition. They built eleven missionary establishments in the various valleys of the peninsula, which formed rallying places for the surrounding savages, where they gathered together as sheep into the fold,

and surrendered themselves and their consciences into the hands of these spiritual pastors. Nothing, we are told, could exceed the implicit and affectionate devotion of the Indian converts to the Jesuit fathers, and the Catholic faith was disseminated widely through the wilderness.

The growing power and influence of the Jesuits in the New World at length excited the jealousy of the Spanish government, and they were banished from the colonies. The governor who arrived at California to expel them, and to take charge of the country, expected to find a rich and powerful fraternity, with immense treasures hoarded in their missions, and an army of Indians ready to defend them. On the contrary, he beheld a few venerable silver-haired priests coming humbly forward to meet him, followed by a throng of weeping but submissive natives. The heart of the governor, it is said, was so touched by this unexpected sight, that he shed tears; but he had to execute his orders. The Jesuits were accompanied to the place of their embarkation by their simple and affectionate parishioners, who took leave of them with tears and sobs. Many of the latter abandoned their hereditary abodes and wandered off to join their southern brethren, so that but a remnant remained in the peninsula. The Franciscans immediately succeeded the Jesuits, and subsequently the Dominicans; but the latter managed their affairs ill. But two of the missionary establishments are at present occupied by priests, the rest are all in ruins, excepting one, which remains a monument of the former power and prosperity of the order. This is a noble edifice, once the seat of the chief of the resident Jesuits. It is situated in a beautiful valley, about half way between the Gulf of California and the broad ocean, the peninsula being here about sixty miles wide. The edifice is of hewn stone, one story high, two hundred and ten feet in front, and about fifty-five feet deep. The walls are six feet thick and sixteen feet high, with a vaulted roof of stone, about two feet and a half in thickness. It is now abandoned and desolate; the beautiful valley is without an inhabitant—not a human being resides within thirty miles of the place!

In approaching this deserted mission-house from the south, the traveller passes over the mountain of San Juan, supposed to be the highest peak in the Californias. From this lofty eminence a vast and magnificent prospect unfolds itself; the

great Gulf of California, with the dark blue sea beyond, studded with islands; and in another direction, the immense lava plain of San Gabriel. The splendour of the climate gives an Italian effect to the immense prospect. The sky is of a deep blue colour, and the sunsets are often magnificent beyond description. Such is a slight and imperfect sketch of this remarkable peninsula.

Upper California extends from latitude $31^{\circ} 10'$ to 42° on the Pacific, and inland, to the great chain of snow-capped mountains which divide it from the sand plains of the interior. There are about twenty-one missions in this province, most of which were established about fifty years since, and are generally under the care of the Franciscans. These exert a protecting sway over about thirty-five thousand Indian converts, who reside on the lands around the mission houses. Each of these houses has fifteen miles square of land allotted to it, subdivided into small lots, proportioned to the number of Indian converts attached to the mission. Some are inclosed with high walls; but in general they are open hamlets, composed of rows of huts, built of sun-burnt bricks; in some instances whitewashed and roofed with tiles. Many of them are far in the interior, beyond the reach of all military protection, and dependent entirely on the good-will of the natives which never fails them. They have made considerable progress in teaching the Indians the useful arts. There are native tanners, shoemakers, weavers, blacksmiths, stonecutters, and other artificers attached to each establishment. Others are taught husbandry, and the rearing of cattle and horses; while the females card and spin wool, weave, and perform the other duties allotted to their sex in civilized life. No social intercourse is allowed between the unmarried of the opposite sexes after working hours; and at night they are locked up in separate apartments, and the keys delivered to the priests.

The produce of the lands, and all the profits arising from sales, are entirely at the disposal of the priests; whatever is not required for the support of the missions goes to augment a fund which is under their control. Hides and tallow constitute the principal riches of the missions, and, indeed, the main commerce of the country. Grain might be produced to an unlimited extent at the establishments were there a sufficient market for it. Olives and grapes are also reared at the missions.

Horses and horned cattle abound throughout all this region; the former may be purchased at from three to five dollars, but they are of an inferior breed. Mules, which are here of a large size and of valuable qualities, cost from seven to ten dollars.

There are several excellent ports along this coast. San Diego, San Barbara, Monterey, the Bay of San Francisco, and the northern port of Bondago, all afford anchorage for ships of the largest class. The port of San Francisco is too well known to require much notice in this place. The entrance from the sea is sixty-seven fathoms deep, and within, whole navies might ride with perfect safety. Two large rivers, which take their rise in mountains two or three hundred miles to the east, and run through a country unsurpassed for soil or climate, empty themselves into the harbour. The country around affords admirable timber for ship-building. In a word, this favoured port combines advantages which not only fit it for a grand naval depôt, but almost render it capable of being made the dominant military post of these seas.

Such is a feeble outline of the Californian coast and country, the value of which is more and more attracting the attention of naval powers. The Russians have always a ship of war upon this station, and have already encroached upon the Californian boundaries, by taking possession of the port of Bondago, and fortifying it with several guns. Recent surveys have likewise been made, both by the Russians and the English; and we have little doubt, that at no very distant day, this neglected, and, until recently, almost unknown region, will be found to possess sources of wealth sufficient to sustain a powerful and prosperous empire. Its inhabitants themselves are but little aware of its real riches; they have not enterprise sufficient to acquaint themselves with a vast interior that lies almost a terra incognita; nor have they the skill and industry to cultivate properly the fertile tracts along the coast, nor to prosecute that foreign commerce which brings all the resources of a country into profitable action.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE wandering band of trappers were well received at Monterey: the inhabitants were desirous of retaining them among them, and offered extravagant wages to such as were acquainted

with any mechanic art. When they went into the country, too, they were kindly treated by the priests at the missions; who are always hospitable to strangers, whatever may be their rank or religion. They had no lack of provisions; being permitted to kill as many as they pleased of the vast herds of cattle that graze the country, on condition, merely, of rendering the hides to the owners. They attended bull-fights and horse-races; forgot all the purposes of their expedition; squandered away, freely, the property that did not belong to them; and, in a word, revelled in a perfect fool's paradise.

What especially delighted them was the equestrian skill of the Californians. The vast number and the cheapness of the horses in this country, makes every one a cavalier. The Mexicans and half-breeds of California, spend the greater part of their time in the saddle. They are fearless riders; and their daring feats upon unbroken colts and wild horses, astonished our trappers; though accustomed to the bold riders of the prairies.

A Mexican horseman has much resemblance, in many points, to the equestrians of Old Spain; and especially to the vain-glorious Caballero of Andalusia. A Mexican dragoon, for instance, is represented as arrayed in a round blue jacket, with red cuffs and collar; blue velvet breeches, unbuttoned at the knees to show his white stockings; bottinas of deer skin; a round-crowned Andalusian hat, and his hair cued. On the pommel of his saddle, he carries balanced a long musket, with fox skin round the lock. He is cased in a cuirass of double-fold deer skin, and carries a bull's-hide shield; he is forked in a Moorish saddle, high before and behind; his feet are thrust into wooden box stirrups, of Moorish fashion, and a tremendous pair of iron spurs, fastened by chains, jingle at his heels. Thus equipped, and suitably mounted, he considers himself the glory of California, and the terror of the universe.

The Californian horsemen seldom ride out without the laso; that is to say, a long coil of cord, with a slip noose; with which they are expert, almost to a miracle. The laso, now almost entirely confined to Spanish America, is said to be of great antiquity; and to have come, originally, from the East. It was used, we are told, by a pastoral people of Persian descent; of whom eight thousand accompanied the army of Xerxes. By the Spanish Americans, it is used for a variety

of purposes ; and among others, for hauling wood. Without dismounting, they cast the noose round a log, and thus drag it to their houses. The vaqueros, or Indian cattle drivers, have also learnt the use of the laso from the Spaniards ; and employ it to catch the half-wild cattle, by throwing it round their horns.

The laso is also of great use in furnishing the public with a favourite, though barbarous sport ; the combat between a bear and a wild bull. For this purpose, three or four horsemen sally forth to some wood, frequented by bears, and, depositing the carcass of a bullock, hide themselves in the vicinity. The bears are soon attracted by the bait. As soon as one, fit for their purpose, makes his appearance, they run out, and with the laso, dexterously noose him by either leg. After dragging him at full speed until he is fatigued, they secure him more effectually ; and tying him on the carcass of the bullock, draw him in triumph to the scene of action. By this time, he is exasperated to such frenzy, that they are sometimes obliged to throw cold water on him, to moderate his fury ; and dangerous would it be, for horse and rider, were he, while in this paroxysm, to break his bonds.

A wild bull, of the fiercest kind, which has been caught and exasperated in the same manner, is now produced ; and both animals are turned loose in the arena of a small amphitheatre. The mortal fight begins instantly ; and always, at first, to the disadvantage of bruin ; fatigued, as he is, by his previous rough riding. Roused, at length, by the repeated goring of the bull, he seizes his muzzle with his sharp claws, and clinging to this most sensitive part, causes him to bellow with rage and agony. In his heat and fury, the bull lolls out his tongue ; this is instantly clutched by the bear ; with a desperate effort he overturns his huge antagonist ; and then dispatches him without difficulty.

Besides this diversion, the travellers were likewise regaled with bull-fights, in the genuine style of Old Spain ; the Californians being considered the best bull-fighters in the Mexican dominions.

After a considerable sojourn at Monterey, spent in these very edifying, but not very profitable amusements, the leader of this vagabond party set out with his comrades, on his return journey. Instead of retracing their steps through the mountains, they passed round their southern extremity, and,

crossing a range of low hills, found themselves in the sandy plains south of Ogden's River ; in traversing which, they again suffered grievously for want of water.

In the course of their journey, they encountered a party of Mexicans in pursuit of a gang of natives, who had been stealing horses. The savages of this part of California are represented as extremely poor, and armed only with stone-pointed arrows ; it being the wise policy of the Spaniards not to furnish them with firearms. As they find it difficult, with their blunt shafts, to kill the wild game of the mountains, they occasionally supply themselves with food, by entrapping the Spanish horses. Driving them stealthily into fastnesses and ravines, they slaughter them without difficulty, and dry their flesh for provisions. Some they carry off, to trade with distant tribes ; and in this way, the Spanish horses pass from hand to hand among the Indians, until they even find their way across the Rocky Mountains.

The Mexicans are continually on the alert, to intercept these marauders ; but the Indians are apt to outwit them, and force them to make long and wild expeditions in pursuit of their stolen horses.

Two of the Mexican party just mentioned, joined the band of trappers, and proved themselves worthy companions. In the course of their journey through the country frequented by the poor Root Diggers, there seems to have been an emulation between them, which could inflict the greatest outrages upon the natives. The trappers still considered them in the light of dangerous foes ; and the Mexicans, very probably, charged them with the sin of horse-stealing ; we have no other mode of accounting for the infamous barbarities of which, according to their own story, they were guilty ; hunting the poor Indians like wild beasts, and killing them without mercy. The Mexicans excelled at this savage sport ; chasing their unfortunate victims at full speed ; noosing them round the neck with their lasos, and then dragging them to death.

Such are the scanty details of this most disgraceful expedition ; at least, such are all that Captain Bonneville had the patience to collect ; for he was so deeply grieved by the failure of his plans, and so indignant at the atrocities related to him, that he turned, with disgust and horror, from the narrators. Had he exerted a little of the Lynch law of the wilderness, and hanged those dexterous horsemen in their own

lasos, it would but have been a well-merited and salutary act of retributive justice. The failure of this expedition was a blow to his pride, and a still greater blow to his purse. The Great Salt Lake still remained unexplored; at the same time, the means which had been furnished so liberally to fit out this favourite expedition, had all been squandered at Monterey; and the peltries, also, which had been collected on the way. He would have but scanty returns, therefore, to make this year, to his associates in the United States; and there was great danger of their becoming disheartened, and abandoning the enterprise.

CHAPTER XL.

THE horror and indignation felt by Captain Bonneville at the excesses of the Californian adventurers were not participated by his men; on the contrary, the events of that expedition were favourite themes in the camp. The heroes of Monterey bore the palm in all the gossipings among the hunters. Their glowing descriptions of Spanish bear-baits and bull-fights especially, were listened to with intense delight; and had another expedition to California been proposed, the difficulty would have been, to restrain a general eagerness to volunteer.

The captain had not been long at the rendezvous when he perceived, by various signs, that Indians were lurking in the neighbourhood. It was evident that the Blackfoot band, which he had seen when on his march, had dogged his party, and were intent on mischief. He endeavoured to keep his camp on the alert; but it is as difficult to maintain discipline among trappers at a rendezvous, as among sailors when in port.

Buckeye, the Delaware Indian, was scandalized at this heedlessness of the hunters when an enemy was at hand, and was continually preaching up caution. He was a little prone to play the prophet, and to deal in signs and portents, which occasionally excited the merriment of his white comrades. He was a great dreamer, and believed in charms and talismans, or medicines, and could foretell the approach of strangers by the howling or barking of the small prairie wolf. This animal, being driven by the larger wolves from the carcasses left on the hunting grounds by the hunters, follows the

trail of the fresh meat carried to the camp. Here the smell of the roast and broiled, mingling with every breeze, keeps them hovering about the neighbourhood ; scenting every blast, turning up their noses like hungry hounds, and testifying their pinching hunger by long whining howls, and impatient barkings. These are interpreted by the superstitious Indians into warnings that strangers are at hand ; and one accidental coincidence, like the chance fulfilment of an almanac prediction, is sufficient to cover a thousand failures. This little, whining, feast-smelling animal is, therefore, called among Indians the "medicine wolf;" and such was one of Buckeye's infallible oracles.

One morning early, the soothsaying Delaware appeared with a gloomy countenance. His mind was full of dismal presentiments, whether from mysterious dreams, or the intimations of the medicine wolf, does not appear. "Danger," he said, "was lurking in their path, and there would be some fighting before sunset." He was bantered for his prophecy, which was attributed to his having supped too heartily, and been visited by bad dreams. In the course of the morning, a party of hunters set out in pursuit of buffalo, taking with them a mule, to bring home the meat they should procure. They had been some few hours absent, when they came clattering at full speed into camp, giving the war cry of Blackfeet! Blackfeet! Every one seized his weapon, and ran to learn the cause of the alarm. It appeared that the hunters, as they were returning leisurely, leading their mule, well laden with prime pieces of buffalo meat, passed close by a small stream overhung with trees, about two miles from the camp. Suddenly, a party of Blackfeet, who lay in ambush among the thickets, sprang up with a fearful yell, and discharged a volley at the hunters. The latter immediately threw themselves flat on their horses, put them to their speed, and never paused to look behind, until they found themselves in camp. Fortunately, they had escaped without a wound ; but the mule, with all the "provant," had fallen into the hands of the enemy. This was a loss, as well as an insult, not to be borne. Every man sprang to horse, and with rifle in hand, galloped off to punish the Blackfeet, and rescue the buffalo beef. They came too late ; the marauders were off, and all that they found of their mule were the dents of his hoofs, as he had been conveyed off at a round trot, bearing his savoury cargo to the hills, to furnish

the scampering savages with a banquet of roast meat at the expense of the white men.

The party returned to camp, balked of their revenge, but still more grievously balked of their supper. Buckeye, the Delaware, sat smoking by his fire, perfectly composed. As the hunters related the particulars of the attack, he listened in silence, with unruffled countenance; then pointing to the west, "The sun has not yet set," said he; "Buckeye did not dream like a fool!"

All present now recollected the prediction of the Indian at daybreak, and were struck with what appeared to be its fulfilment. They called to mind, also, a long catalogue of foregone presentiments and predictions made at various times by the Delaware, and, in their superstitious credulity, began to consider him a veritable seer; without thinking how natural it was to predict danger, and how likely to have the prediction verified in the present instance, when various signs gave evidence of a lurking foe.

The various bands of Captain Bonneville's company had now been assembled for some time at the rendezvous; they had had their fill of feasting, and frolicking, and all the species of wild and often uncouth merry-making, which invariably take place on these occasions. Their horses, as well as themselves, had recovered from past famine and fatigue, and were again fit for active service; and an impatience began to manifest itself among the men once more to take the field, and set off on some wandering expedition.

At this juncture, Mr. Cerré arrived at the rendezvous at the head of a supply party, bringing goods and equipments from the States. This active leader, it will be recollected, had embarked the year previously in skin-boats on the Bighorn, freighted with the year's collection of peltries. He had met with misfortunes in the course of his voyage: one of his frail barks being upset, and part of the furs lost or damaged.

The arrival of the supplies gave the regular finish to the annual revel. A grand outbreak of wild debauch ensued among the mountaineers; drinking, dancing, swaggering, gambling, quarrelling, and fighting. Alcohol, which, from its portable qualities, containing the greatest quantity of fiery spirit in the smallest compass, is the only liquor carried across the mountains, is the inflammatory beverage at these carousals, and is dealt out to the trappers at four dollars a

pint. When inflamed by this fiery beverage, they cut all kinds of mad pranks and gambols, and sometimes burn all their clothes in their drunken bravadoes. A camp recovering from one of these riotous revels presents a serio-comic spectacle; black eyes, broken heads, lacklustre visages. Many of the trappers have squandered in one drunken frolic the hard-earned wages of a year; some have run in debt, and must toil on to pay for past pleasure. All are sated with this deep draught of pleasure, and eager to commence another trapping campaign; for hardship and hard work, spiced with the stimulants of wild adventure, and topped off with an annual frantic carousal, is the lot of the restless trapper.

The captain now made his arrangements for the current year. Cerré and Walker, with a number of men who had been to California, were to proceed to St. Louis with the packages of furs collected during the past year. Another party, headed by a leader named Montero, was to proceed to the Crow country, trap upon its various streams, and among the Black Hills, and thence to proceed to the Arkansas, where he was to go into winter quarters.

The captain marked out for himself a widely different course. He intended to make another expedition, with twenty-three men, to the lower part of the Columbia River, and to proceed to the valley of the Multnomah; after wintering in those parts, and establishing a trade with those tribes, among whom he had sojourned on his first visit, he would return in the spring, cross the Rocky Mountains, and join Montero and his party in the month of July, at the rendezvous of the Arkansas; where he expected to receive his annual supplies from the States.

If the reader will cast his eye upon a map, he may form an idea of the contempt for distance which a man acquires in this vast wilderness, by noticing the extent of country comprised in these projected wanderings. Just as the different parties were about to set out on the 3rd of July, on their opposite routes, Captain Bonneville received intelligence that Wyeth, the indefatigable leader of the salmon-fishing enterprise, who had parted with him about a year previously on the banks of the Bighorn, to descend that wild river in a bull boat, was near at hand, with a new levied band of hunters and trappers, and was on his way once more to the banks of the Columbia.

As we take much interest in the novel enterprise of this "eastern man," and are pleased with his pushing and persevering spirit, and as his movements are characteristic of life in the wilderness, we will, with the reader's permission, while Captain Bonneville is breaking up his camp and saddling his horses, step back a year in time, and a few hundred miles in distance, to the bank of the Bighorn, and launch ourselves with Wyeth in his bull boat; and though his adventurous voyage will take us many hundreds of miles further down wild and wandering rivers, yet such is the magic power of the pen, that we promise to bring the reader safe back to Bear River valley, by the time the last horse is saddled.

CHAPTER XLI.

A VOYAGE IN A BULL BOAT.

It was about the middle of August (1830) that Mr. Nathaniel J. Wyeth, as the reader may recollect, launched his bull boat at the foot of the rapids of the Bighorn, and departed in advance of the parties of Campbell and Captain Bonneville. His boat was made of three buffalo skins, stretched on a light frame, stitched together, and the seams payed with elk tallow and ashes. It was eighteen feet long, and about five feet six inches wide, sharp at each end, with a round bottom, and drew about a foot and a half of water; a depth too great for these upper rivers, which abound with shallows and sand-bars. The crew consisted of two half-breeds, who claimed to be white men, though a mixture of the French creole and the Shawnee and Potawattomie. They claimed, moreover, to be thorough mountaineers, and first-rate hunters—the common boast of these vagabonds of the wilderness. Besides these, there was a Nez Percé lad of eighteen years of age, a kind of servant of all work, whose great aim, like all Indian servants, was to do as little work as possible; there was, moreover, a half-breed boy, of thirteen, named Baptiste, son of a Hudson's Bay trader by a Flathead beauty; who was travelling with Wyeth to see the world and complete his education. Add to these Mr. Milton Sublette, who went as passenger, and we have the crew of the little bull boat complete.

It certainly was a slight armament with which to run the gauntlet through countries swarming with hostile hordes, and

a slight bark to navigate these endless rivers, tossing and pitching down rapids, running on snags and bumping on sand-bars; such, however, are the cockle-shells with which these hardy rovers of the wilderness will attempt the wildest streams; and it is surprising what rough shocks and thumps these boats will endure, and what vicissitudes they will live through. Their duration, however, is but limited; they require frequently to be hauled out of the water and dried, to prevent the hides from becoming water-soaked; and they eventually rot and go to pieces.

The course of the river was a little to the north of east; it ran about five miles an hour, over a gravelly bottom. The banks were generally alluvial, and thickly grown with cotton-wood trees, intermingled occasionally with ash and plum trees. Now and then limestone cliffs and promontories advanced upon the river, making picturesque headlands. Beyond the woody borders rose ranges of naked hills.

Milton Sublette was the Pelorus of this adventurous bark; being somewhat experienced in this wild kind of navigation. It required all his attention and skill, however, to pilot her clear of sand-bars and snags, or sunken trees. There was often, too, a perplexity of choice, where the river branched into various channels, among clusters of islands; and occasionally the voyagers found themselves aground and had to turn back.

It was necessary, also, to keep a wary eye upon the land, for they were passing through the heart of the Crow country, and were continually in reach of any ambush that might be lurking on shore. The most formidable foes that they saw, however, were three grizzly bears, quietly promenading along the bank, who seemed to gaze at them with surprise as they glided by. Herds of buffalo, also, were moving about, or lying on the ground, like cattle in a pasture; excepting such inhabitants as these, a perfect solitude reigned over the land. There was no sign of human habitation; for the Crows, as we have already shown, are a wandering people, a race of hunters and warriors, who live in tents and on horseback, and are continually on the move.

At night they landed, hauled up their boat to dry, pitched their tent, and made a rousing fire. Then, as it was the first evening of their voyage, they indulged in a regale, relishing their buffalo beef with inspiring alcohol; after which, they

slept soundly, without dreaming of Crows or Blackfeet. Early in the morning, they again launched their boat and committed themselves to the stream.

In this way, they voyaged for two days without any material occurrence, excepting a severe thunder storm, which compelled them to put to shore, and wait until it was past. On the third morning, they descried some persons at a distance on the river bank. As they were now, by calculation, at no great distance from Fort Cass, a trading post of the American Fur Company, they supposed these might be some of its people. A nearer approach showed them to be Indians. Descrying a woman apart from the rest, they landed and accosted her. She informed them that the main force of the Crow nation, consisting of five bands, under their several chiefs, were but about two or three miles below, on their way up along the river. This was unpleasant tidings, but to retreat was impossible, and the river afforded no hiding place. They continued forward, therefore, trusting that, as Fort Cass was so near at hand, the Crows might refrain from any depredations.

Floating down about two miles further, they came in sight of the first band, scattered along the river bank, all well mounted; some armed with guns, others with bows and arrows, and a few with lances. They made a wildly picturesque appearance, managing their horses with their accustomed dexterity and grace. Nothing can be more spirited than a band of Crow cavaliers. They are a fine race of men, averaging six feet in height, lithe and active, with hawks' eyes and Roman noses. The latter feature is common to the Indians on the east side of the Rocky Mountains; those on the western side have generally straight or flat noses.

Wyeth would fain have slipped by this cavalcade unnoticed; but the river, at this place, was not more than ninety yards across; he was perceived, therefore, and hailed by the vagabond warriors, and, we presume, in no very choice language; for, among their other accomplishments, the Crows are famed for possessing a Billingsgate vocabulary of unrivalled opulence, and for being by no means sparing of it whenever an occasion offers. Indeed, though Indians are generally very lofty, rhetorical, and figurative in their language at all great talks, and high ceremonials, yet, if trappers and traders may be believed, they are the most unsavoury

vagabonds in their ordinary colloquies ; they make no hesitation to call a spade a spade ; and when they once undertake to call hard names, the famous pot and kettle, of vituperating memory, are not to be compared with them for scurrility of epithet.

To escape the infliction of any compliments of the kind, or the launching, peradventure, of more dangerous missiles, Wyeth landed with the best grace in his power, and approached the chief of the band. It was Arapooish, the quondam friend of Rose the outlaw, and one whom we have already mentioned as being anxious to promote a friendly intercourse between his tribe and the white men. He was a tall, stout man, of good presence, and received the voyagers very graciously. His people, too, thronged around them, and were officiously attentive after the Crow fashion. One took a great fancy to Baptiste, the Flathead boy, and a still greater fancy to a ring on his finger, which he transposed to his own with surprising dexterity, and then disappeared with a quick step among the crowd.

Another was no less pleased with the Nez Percé lad, and nothing would do but he must exchange knives with him ; drawing a new knife out of the Nez Percé's scabbard, and putting an old one in its place. Another stepped up and replaced this old knife with one still older, and a third helped himself to knife, scabbard, and all. It was with much difficulty that Wyeth and his companions extricated themselves from the clutches of these officious Crows before they were entirely plucked.

Falling down the river a little further, they came in sight of the second band, and sheered to the opposite side, with the intention of passing them. The Crows were not to be evaded. Some pointed their guns at the boat, and threatened to fire ; others stripped, plunged into the stream, and came swimming across. Making a virtue of necessity, Wyeth threw a cord to the first that came within reach, as if he wished to be drawn to the shore.

In this way he was overhauled by every band, and by the time he and his people came out of the busy hands of the last, they were eased of most of their superfluities. Nothing, in all probability, but the proximity of the American trading post, kept these land pirates from making a good prize of the bull boat and all its contents.

These bands were in full march, equipped for war, and evidently full of mischief. They were, in fact, the very bands that overrun the land in the autumn of 1833; partly robbed Fitzpatrick of his horses and effects; hunted and harassed Captain Bonneville and his people; broke up their trapping campaigns, and, in a word, drove them all out of the Crow country. It has been suspected that they were set on to these pranks by some of the American Fur Company, anxious to defeat the plans of their rivals of the Rocky Mountain Company; for, at this time, their competition was at its height, and the trade of the Crow country was a great object of rivalry. What makes this the more probable is, that the Crows in their depredations seemed by no means bloodthirsty, but intent chiefly on robbing the parties of their traps and horses, thereby disabling them from prosecuting their hunting.

We should observe that this year, the Rocky Mountain Company were pushing their way up the rivers, and establishing rival posts near those of the American Company; and that, at the very time of which we are speaking, Captain Sublette was ascending the Yellowstone with a keel boat, laden with supplies; so that there was every prospect of this eager rivalry being carried to extremities.

The last band of Crow warriors had scarce disappeared in the cloud of dust they had raised, when our voyagers arrived at the mouth of the river, and glided into the current of the Yellowstone. Turning down this stream, they made for Fort Cass, which is situated on the right bank, about three miles below the Bighorn. On the opposite side, they beheld a party of thirty-one savages, which they soon ascertained to be Blackfeet. The width of the river enabled them to keep at a sufficient distance, and they soon landed at Fort Cass. This was a mere fortification against Indians; being a stockade of about one hundred and thirty feet square, with two bastions at the extreme corners. M'Tulloch, an agent of the American Company, was stationed there with twenty men; two boats of fifteen tons burden were lying here; but at certain seasons of the year a steamboat can come up to the fort.

They had scarcely arrived, when the Blackfeet warriors made their appearance on the opposite bank, displaying two American flags in token of amity. They plunged into the river, swam across, and were kindly received at the fort.

They were some of the very men who had been engaged, the year previously, in the battle at Pierre's Hole, and a fierce-looking set of fellows they were ; tall and hawk-nosed, and very much resembling the Crows. They professed to be on an amicable errand, to make peace with the Crows, and set off in all haste, before night, to overtake them. Wyeth predicted that they would lose their scalps, for he had heard the Crows denounce vengeance on them, for having murdered two of their warriors who had ventured among them on the faith of a treaty of peace. It is probable, however, that this pacific errand was all a pretence, and that the real object of the Blackfeet braves was to hang about the skirts of the Crow bands, steal their horses, and take the scalps of stragglers.

At Fort Cass, Mr. Wyeth disposed of some packages of beaver, and a quantity of buffalo robes. On the following morning (August 18), he once more launched his bull boat, and proceeded down the Yellowstone, which inclined in an east-north-east direction. The river had alluvial bottoms, fringed with great quantities of the sweet cotton-wood, and interrupted occasionally by "bluffs" of sandstone. The current occasionally brings down fragments of granite and porphyry.

In the course of the day, they saw something moving on the bank among the trees, which they mistook for game of some kind ; and, being in want of provisions, pulled towards shore. They discovered, just in time, a party of Blackfeet, lurking in the thickets, and sheered, with all speed, to the opposite side of the river.

After a time, they came in sight of a gang of elk. Wyeth was immediately for pursuing them, rifle in hand, but saw evident signs of dissatisfaction in his half-breed hunters ; who considered him as trenching upon their province, and meddling with things quite above his capacity ; for these veterans of the wilderness are exceedingly pragmatical on points of venery and woodcraft, and tenacious of their superiority ; looking down with infinite contempt upon all raw beginners. The two worthies, therefore, sallied forth themselves ; but after a time, returned empty-handed. They laid the blame, however, entirely on their guns ; two miserable old pieces with flint locks, which, with all their picking and hammering, were continually apt to miss fire. These great boasters of the wilderness, however, are very often exceeding bad shots, and fortunate it is for them when they have old flint guns to bear the blame.

The next day they passed where a great herd of buffalo were bellowing on a prairie. Again the Castor and Pollux of the wilderness sallied forth, and again their flint guns were at fault, and missed fire, and nothing went off but the buffalo. Wyeth now found there was danger of losing his dinner if he depended upon his hunters; he took rifle in hand, therefore, and went forth himself. In the course of an hour he returned laden with buffalo meat, to the great mortification of the two regular hunters, who were annoyed at being eclipsed by a greenhorn.

All hands now set to work to prepare the mid-day repast. A fire was made under an immense cotton-wood tree that overshadowed a beautiful piece of meadow land; rich morsels of buffalo hump were soon roasting before it; in a hearty and prolonged repast, the two unsuccessful hunters gradually recovered from their mortification, threatened to discard their old flint guns as soon as they should reach the settlements, and boasted more than ever of the wonderful shots they had made when they had guns that never missed fire.

Having hauled up their boat to dry in the sun, previous to making their repast, the voyagers now set it once more afloat, and proceeded on their way. They had constructed a sail out of their old tent, which they hoisted whenever the wind was favourable, and thus skimmed along down the stream. Their voyage was pleasant, notwithstanding the perils by sea and land with which they were environed. Whenever they could, they encamped on islands, for the greater security. If on the mainland, and in a dangerous neighbourhood, they would shift their camp after dark, leaving their fire burning, dropping down the river to some distance, and making no fire at their second encampment. Sometimes they would float all night with the current; one keeping watch and steering while the rest slept: in such case, they would haul their boat on shore, at noon of the following day, to dry; for, notwithstanding every precaution, she was gradually getting water-soaked and rotten.

There was something pleasingly solemn and mysterious in thus floating down these wild rivers at night. The purity of the atmosphere in these elevated regions gave additional splendour to the stars, and heightened the magnificence of the firmament. The occasional rush and laving of the waters; the vague sounds from the surrounding wilderness; the dreary howl, or rather whine, of wolves from the plains; the low

grunting and bellowing of the buffalo; and the shrill neighing of the elk; struck the ear with an effect unknown in the daytime.

The two knowing hunters had scarcely recovered from one mortification, when they were fated to experience another. As the boat was gliding swiftly round a low promontory, thinly covered with trees, one of them gave the alarm of Indians. The boat was instantly shoved from shore, and every one caught up his rifle. "Where are they?" cried Wyeth.

"There—there! riding on horseback!" cried one of the hunters.

"Yes; with white scarfs on!" cried the other.

Wyeth looked in the direction they pointed, but descried nothing but two bald eagles, perched on a low dry branch, beyond the thickets, and seeming, from the rapid motion of the boat, to be moving swiftly in an opposite direction. The detection of this blunder in the two veterans, who prided themselves on the sureness and quickness of their sight, produced a hearty laugh at their expense, and put an end to their vauntings.

The Yellowstone, above the confluence of the Bighorn, is a clear stream; its waters were now gradually growing turbid, and assuming the yellow clay colour of the Missouri. The current was about four miles an hour, with occasional rapids; some of them dangerous, but the voyagers passed them all without accident. The banks of the river were in many places precipitous, with strata of bituminous coal.

They now entered a region abounding with buffalo—that ever-journeying animal, which moves in countless droves from point to point of the vast wilderness; traversing plains, pouring through the intricate defiles of mountains, swimming rivers, ever on the move; guided on its boundless migrations by some traditionary knowledge, like the finny tribes of the ocean, which, at certain seasons, find their mysterious paths across the deep, and revisit the remotest shores.

These great migratory herds of buffalo have their hereditary paths and highways, worn deep through the country, and making for the surest passes of the mountains, and the most practicable fords of the rivers. When once a great column is in full career, it goes straight forward, regardless of all obstacles; those in front being impelled by the moving mass behind. At such times, they will break through a camp, trampling down everything in their course.

It was the lot of the voyagers, one night, to encamp at one of these buffalo landing places, and exactly on the trail. They had not been long asleep, when they were awakened by a great bellowing, and tramping, and the rush, and splash, and snorting of animals in the river. They had just time to ascertain that a buffalo army was entering the river on the opposite side, and making towards the landing place. With all haste they moved their boat and shifted their camp, by which time the head of the column had reached the shore, and came pressing up the bank.

It was a singular spectacle, by the uncertain moonlight, to behold this countless throng making their way across the river, blowing, and bellowing, and splashing. Sometimes they pass in such dense and continuous column as to form a temporary dam across the river; the waters of which rise and rush over their backs, or between their squadrons. The roaring and rushing sound of one of these vast herds crossing a river, may sometimes, in a still night, be heard for miles.

The voyagers now had game in profusion. They could kill as many buffalo as they pleased, and, occasionally, were wanton in their havoc; especially among scattered herds, that came swimming near the boat. On one occasion, an old buffalo bull approached so near, that the half-breeds must fain try to noose him, as they would a wild horse. The noose was successfully thrown around his head, and secured him by the horns, and they now promised themselves ample sport. The buffalo made a prodigious turmoil in the water, bellowing, and blowing, and floundering; and they all floated down the stream together. At length he found foothold on a sand-bar, and taking to his heels, whirled the boat after him, like a whale when harpooned; so that the hunters were obliged to cast off their rope, with which strange head-gear the venerable bull made off to the prairies.

On the 24th of August, the bull boat emerged, with its adventurous crew, into the broad bosom of the mighty Missouri. Here, about six miles above the mouth of the Yellowstone, the voyagers landed at Fort Union, the distributing post of the American Fur Company in the western country. It was a stockaded fortress, about two hundred and twenty feet square, pleasantly situated on a high bank. Here they were hospitably entertained by Mr. M'Kenzie, the superintendent, and remained with him three days, enjoying the unusual luxuries of bread, butter, milk, and cheese, for the

fort was well supplied with domestic cattle, though it had no garden. The atmosphere of these elevated regions is said to be too dry for the culture of vegetables; yet the voyagers, in coming down the Yellowstone, had met with plums, grapes, cherries, and currants, and had observed ash and elm trees. Where these grow, the climate cannot be incompatible with gardening.

At Fort Union, Wyeth met with a melancholy memento of one of his men. This was a powder-flask, which a clerk had purchased from a Blackfoot warrior. It bore the initials of poor More, the unfortunate youth murdered the year previously, at Jackson's Hole, by the Blackfeet, and whose bones had been subsequently found by Captain Bonneville. This flask had either been passed from hand to hand of the tribe, or, perhaps, had been brought to the fort by the very savage who slew him.

As the bull boat was now nearly worn out, and altogether unfit for the broader and more turbulent stream of the Missouri, it was given up, and a canoe of cotton-wood, about twenty feet long, fabricated by the Blackfeet, was purchased to supply its place. In this Wyeth hoisted his sail, and bidding adieu to the hospitable superintendent of Fort Union, turned his prow to the east, and set off down the Missouri.

He had not proceeded many hours, before, in the evening, he came to a large keel boat, at anchor. It proved to be the boat of Captain William Sublette, freighted with munitions for carrying on a powerful opposition to the American Fur Company. The voyagers went on board, where they were treated with the hearty hospitality of the wilderness, and passed a social evening, talking over past scenes and adventures, and especially the memorable fight at Pierre's Hole.

Here Milton Sublette determined to give up further voyaging in the canoe, and remain with his brother; accordingly, in the morning, the fellow-voyagers took kind leave of each other, and Wyeth continued on his course. There was now no one on board of his boat that had ever voyaged on the Missouri; it was, however, all plain sailing down the stream, without any chance of missing the way.

All day the voyagers pulled gently along, and landed in the evening and supped; then re-embarking, they suffered the canoe to float down with the current; taking turns to watch and sleep. The night was calm and serene; the elk

kept up a continual whinnying or squealing, being the commencement of the season when they are in heat. In the midst of the night, the canoe struck on a sand-bar, and all hands were aroused by the rush and roar of the wild waters, which broke around her. They were all obliged to jump overboard, and work hard to get her off, which was accomplished with much difficulty.

In the course of the following day they saw three grizzly bears at different times along the bank. The last one was on a point of land, and was evidently making for the river, to swim across. The two half-breed hunters were now eager to repeat the manœuvre of the noose; promising to entrap Bruin, and have rare sport in strangling and drowning him. Their only fear was, that he might take fright and return to land before they could get between him and the shore. Holding back, therefore, until he was fairly committed in the centre of the stream, they then pulled forward with might and main, so as to cut off his retreat, and take him in the rear. One of the worthies stationed himself in the bow, with the cord and slip-noose, the other, with the Nez Percé, managed the paddles. There was nothing further from the thoughts of honest Bruin, however, than to beat a retreat. Just as the canoe was drawing near, he turned suddenly round and made for it, with a horrible snarl, and a tremendous show of teeth. The affrighted hunter called to his comrades to paddle off. Scarce had they turned the boat, when the bear laid his enormous claws on the gunwale, and attempted to get on board. The canoe was nearly overturned, and a deluge of water came pouring over the gunwale. All was clamour, terror, and confusion. Every one bawled out—the bear roared and snarled—one caught up a gun; but water had rendered it useless. Others handled their paddles more effectually, and beating old Bruin about the head and claws, obliged him to relinquish his hold. They now plied their paddles with might and main, the bear made the best of his way to shore, and so ended the second exploit of the noose; the hunters determining to have no more naval contests with grizzly bears.

The voyagers were now out of the range of Crows and Blackfeet; but they were approaching the country of the Rees, or Arickaras; a tribe no less dangerous, and who were generally hostile to small parties.

In passing through their country Wyeth laid by all day,

and drifted quietly down the river at night. In this way he passed on, until he supposed himself safely through the region of danger, when he resumed his voyaging in the open day. On the 3rd of September he had landed, at mid-day, to dine, and while some were making a fire, one of the hunters mounted a high bank to look out for game. He had scarce glanced his eye round, when he perceived horses grazing on the opposite side of the river. Crouching down, he slunk back to the camp, and reported what he had seen. On further reconnoitring, the voyagers counted twenty-one lodges, and from the number of horses, computed that there must be nearly a hundred Indians encamped there. They now drew their boat, with all speed and caution, into a thicket of water willows, and remained closely concealed all day. As soon as the night closed in they re-embarked. The moon would rise early; so that they had but about two hours of darkness to get past the camp. The night, however, was cloudy, with a blustering wind. Silently, and with muffled oars, they glided down the river, keeping close under the shore opposite to the camp; watching its various lodges and fires, and the dark forms passing to and fro between them. Suddenly, on turning a point of land, they found themselves close upon a camp on their own side of the river. It appeared that not more than one half of the band had crossed. They were within a few yards of the shore; they saw distinctly the savages—some standing, some lying round the fire. Horses were grazing around. Some lodges were set up, others had been sent across the river. The red glare of the fires upon these wild groups and harsh faces, contrasted with the surrounding darkness, had a startling effect as the voyagers suddenly came upon the scene. The dogs of the camp perceived them and barked; but the Indians, fortunately, took no heed of their clamour. Wyeth instantly sheered his boat out into the stream, when, unluckily, it struck upon a sand-bar, and stuck fast. It was a perilous and trying situation; for he was fixed between the two camps, and within rifle range of both. All hands jumped out into the water, and tried to get the boat off; but as no one dared to give the word, they could not pull together, and their labour was in vain. In this way they laboured for a long time, until Wyeth thought of giving a signal for a general heave by lifting his hat. The expedient succeeded. They launched their canoe again into deep water, and getting in,

had the delight of seeing the camp fires of the savages soon fading in the distance.

They continued under weigh the greater part of the night, until far beyond all danger from this band, when they pulled to shore and encamped.

The following day was windy, and they came near upsetting their boat in carrying sail. Towards evening the wind subsided, and a beautiful calm night succeeded. They floated along with the current throughout the night, taking turns to watch and steer. The deep stillness of the night was occasionally interrupted by the neighing of the elk, the hoarse lowing of the buffalo, the hooting of large owls, and the screeching of the small ones, now and then the splash of a beaver, or the gong-like sound of the swan.

Part of their voyage was extremely tempestuous, with high winds, tremendous thunder, and soaking rain; and they were repeatedly in extreme danger from drift-wood and sunken trees. On one occasion, having continued to float at night, after the moon was down, they ran under a great snag, or sunken tree, with dry branches above the water. These caught the mast, while the boat swung round, broadside to the stream, and began to fill with water. Nothing saved her from total wreck but cutting away the mast. She then drove down the stream, but left one of the unlucky half-breeds clinging to the snag, like a monkey to a pole. It was necessary to run in shore, toil up laboriously along the eddies, and to attain some distance above the snag, when they launched forth again into the stream, and floated down with it to his rescue.

We forbear to detail all the circumstances and adventures, of upwards of a month's voyage, down the windings and doublings of this vast river; in the course of which they stopped occasionally at a post of one of the rival fur companies, or at a government agency for an Indian tribe. Neither shall we dwell upon the changes of climate and productions, as the voyagers swept down from north to south, across several degrees of latitude, arriving at the regions of oaks and sycamores, of mulberry and basswood trees, of parquets and wild turkeys. This is one of the characteristics of the middle and lower part of the Missouri; but still more so of the Mississippi, whose rapid current traverses a succession of latitudes, so as in a few days to float the voyager almost from the frozen regions to the tropics.

The voyage of Wyeth shows the regular and unobstructed flow of the rivers on the east side of the Rocky Mountains in contrast to those of the western side, where rocks and rapids continually menace and obstruct the voyager. We find him in a frail bark of skins, launching himself in a stream at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and floating down from river to river, as they empty themselves into each other; and so he might have kept on upwards of two thousand miles, until his little bark should drift into the ocean. At present we shall stop with him at Cantonment Leavenworth, the frontier post of the United States, where he arrived on the 27th of September.

Here his first care was to have his Nez Percé Indian and his half-breed boy, Baptiste, vaccinated. As they approached the fort they were hailed by the sentinel. The sight of a soldier in full array, with what appeared to be a long knife glittering on the end of his musket, struck Baptiste with such affright, that he took to his heels, bawling for mercy at the top of his voice. The Nez Percé would have followed him had not Wyeth assured him of his safety. When they underwent the operation of the lancet, the doctor's wife and another lady were present, both beautiful women. They were the first white women that they had seen, and they could not keep their eyes off of them. On returning to the boat, they recounted to their companions all that they had observed at the fort; but were especially eloquent about the white squaws, who, they said, were white as snow, and more beautiful than any human being they had ever beheld.

We shall not accompany the captain any further in his voyage; but will simply state that he made his way to Boston, where he succeeded in organizing an association under the name of "The Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company," for his original objects of a salmon fishery and a trade in furs. A brig, the *May Dacres*, had been dispatched for the Columbia with supplies, and he was now on his way to the same point, at the head of sixty men, whom he had enlisted at St. Louis, some of whom were experienced hunters, and all more habituated to the life of the wilderness than his first band of "down-easters."

We will now return to Captain Bonneville and his party, whom we left making up their packs and saddling their horses in Bear River valley.

CHAPTER XLII.

It was the 3rd of July, that Captain Bonneville set out on his second visit to the banks of the Columbia, at the head of twenty-three men. He travelled leisurely, to keep his horses fresh, until, on the 10th of July, a scout brought word that Wyeth, with his band, was but fifty miles in the rear, and pushing forward with all speed. This caused some bustle in the camp; for it was important to get first to the buffalo ground, to secure provisions for the journey. As the horses were too heavily laden to travel fast, a cache was dug, as promptly as possible, to receive all superfluous baggage. Just as it was finished, a spring burst out of the earth at the bottom. Another cache was therefore dug, about two miles further on; when, as they were about to bury the effects, a line of horsemen, with pack-horses, were seen streaking over the plain, and encamped close by.

It proved to be a small band in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, under the command of a veteran Canadian; one of those petty leaders, who, with a small party of men, and a small supply of goods, are employed to follow up a band of Indians from one hunting ground to another, and buy up their peltries.

Having received numerous civilities from the Hudson's Bay Company, the captain sent an invitation to the officers of the party to an evening regale; and set to work to make jovial preparations. As the night air in these elevated regions is apt to be cold, a blazing fire was soon made, that would have done credit to a Christmas dinner, instead of a midsummer banquet. The parties met in high good-fellowship. There was abundance of such hunters' fare as the neighbourhood furnished; and it was all discussed with mountain appetites. They talked over all the events of their late campaigns; but the Canadian veteran had been unlucky in some of his transactions; and his brow began to grow cloudy. Captain Bonneville remarked his rising spleen, and regretted that he had no juice of the grape, to keep it down.

A man's wit, however, is quick and inventive in the wilderness; a thought suggested itself to the captain, how he might brew a delectable beverage. Among his stores, was a keg of honey but half exhausted. This he filled up with alcohol, and stirred the fiery and mellifluous ingredients together.

The glorious result may readily be imagined; a happy compound of strength and sweetness, enough to soothe the most ruffled temper, and unsettle the most solid understanding.

The beverage worked to a charm; the can circulated merrily; the first deep draught washed out every care from the mind of the veteran; the second elevated his spirit to the clouds. He was, in fact, a boon companion; as all veteran Canadian traders are apt to be. He now became glorious; talked over all his exploits, his huntings, his fightings with Indian braves, his loves with Indian beauties; sang snatches of old French ditties, and Canadian boat songs; drank deeper and deeper, sang louder and louder; until, having reached a climax of drunken gaiety, he gradually declined, and at length fell fast asleep upon the ground. After a long nap, he again raised his head, imbibed another potation of the "sweet and strong," flashed up with another slight blaze of French gaiety, and again fell asleep.

The morning found him still upon the field of action, but in sad and sorrowful condition; suffering the penalties of past pleasures, and calling to mind the captain's dulcet compound, with many a retch and spasm. It seemed as if the honey and alcohol, which had passed so glibly and smoothly over his tongue, were at war within his stomach; and that he had a swarm of bees within his head. In short, so helpless and wo-begone was his plight, that his party proceeded on their march without him; the captain promising to bring him on in safety, in the after part of the day.

As soon as this party had moved off, Captain Bonneville's men proceeded to construct and fill their cache; and just as it was completed, the party of Wyeth was descried at a distance. In a moment, all was activity to take the road. The horses were prepared and mounted; and being lightened of a great part of their burdens, were able to move with celerity. As to the worthy convive of the preceding evening, he was carefully gathered up from the hunter's couch on which he lay, repentant and supine, and, being packed upon one of the horses, was hurried forward with the convoy, groaning and ejaculating at every jolt.

In the course of the day, Wyeth, being lightly mounted, rode ahead of his party, and overtook Captain Bonneville. Their meeting was friendly and courteous; and they discussed, sociably, their respective fortunes since they separated

on the banks of the Bighorn. Wyeth announced his intention of establishing a small trading post at the mouth of the Portneuf, and leaving a few men there, with a quantity of goods, to trade with the neighbouring Indians. He was compelled, in fact, to this measure, in consequence of the refusal of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company to take a supply of goods, which he had brought out for them according to contract; and which he had no other mode of disposing of. He further informed Captain Bonneville, that the competition between the Rocky Mountain and American Fur Companies, which had led to such nefarious stratagems, and deadly feuds, was at an end; they having divided the country between them; allotting boundaries, within which each was to trade and hunt, so as not to interfere with the other.

In company with Wyeth, were travelling two men of science: Mr. Nuttall, the botanist; the same who ascended the Missouri, at the time of the expedition to Astoria; and Mr. Townshend, an ornithologist; from these gentlemen, we may look forward to important information concerning these interesting regions. There were three religious missionaries, also, bound to the shores of the Columbia, to spread the light of the gospel in that far wilderness.

After riding for some time together, in friendly conversation, Wyeth returned to his party, and Captain Bonneville continued to press forward, and to gain ground. At night, he sent off the sadly sober and moralizing chief of the Hudson's Bay Company, under a proper escort, to rejoin his people; his route branching off in a different direction. The latter took a cordial leave of his host, hoping, on some future occasion, to repay his hospitality in kind.

In the morning, the captain was early on the march, throwing scouts out far ahead, to scour hill and dale, in search of buffalo. He had confidently expected to find game, in abundance, on the head waters of the Portneuf; but on reaching that region, not a track was to be seen.

At length, one of the scouts, who had made a wide sweep away to the head waters of the Blackfoot River, discovered great herds quietly grazing in the adjacent meadows. He set out on his return, to report his discoveries; but night overtaking him, he was kindly and hospitably entertained at the camp of Wyeth. As soon as day dawned, he hastened to his own camp with the welcome intelligence; and about ten

o'clock of the same morning, Captain Bonneville's party were in the midst of the game.

The packs were scarcely off the backs of the mules, when the runners, mounted on the fleetest horses, were full tilt after the buffalo. Others of the men were busied erecting scaffolds, and other contrivances, for jerking or drying meat; others were lighting great fires for the same purpose; soon the hunters began to make their appearance, bringing in the choicest morsels of buffalo meat; these were placed upon the scaffolds, and the whole camp presented a scene of singular hurry and activity. At daylight the next morning, the runners again took the field, with similar success; and, after an interval of repose made their third and last chase, about twelve o'clock; for by this time, Wyeth's party was in sight. The game being now driven into a valley, at some distance, Wyeth was obliged to fix his camp there; but he came in the evening to pay Captain Bonneville a visit. He was accompanied by Captain Stewart, the amateur traveller; who had not yet sated his appetite for the adventurous life of the wilderness. With him, also, was a Mr. McKay, a half-breed; son of the unfortunate adventurer of the same name, who came out in the first maritime expedition to Astoria, and was blown up in the Tonquin. His son had grown up in the employ of the British fur companies; and was a prime hunter, and a daring partisan. He held, moreover, a farm, in the valley of the Wallamut.

The three visitors, when they reached Captain Bonneville's camp, were surprised to find no one in it but himself and three men; his party being dispersed in all directions, to make the most of their present chance for hunting. They remonstrated with him on the imprudence of remaining with so trifling a guard, in a region so full of danger. Captain Bonneville vindicated the policy of his conduct. He never hesitated to send out all his hunters, when any important object was to be attained; and experience had taught him that he was most secure, when his forces were thus distributed over the surrounding country. He then was sure that no enemy could approach, from any direction, without being discovered by his hunters; who have a quick eye for detecting the slightest signs of the proximity of Indians; and who would instantly convey intelligence to the camp.

The captain now set to work with his men, to prepare a

suitable entertainment for his guests. It was a time of plenty in the camp; of prime hunters' dainties; of buffalo humps, and buffalo tongues; and roasted ribs, and broiled marrow-bones: all these were cooked in hunters' style; served up with a profusion known only on a plentiful hunting ground, and discussed with an appetite that would astonish the puny gourmands of the cities. But above all, and to give a bacchanalian grace to this truly masculine repast, the captain produced his mellifluous keg of home-brewed nectar, which had been so potent over the senses of the veteran of Hudson's Bay. Potations, pottle deep, again went round: never did beverage excite greater glee, or meet with more rapturous commendation. The parties were fast advancing to that happy state, which would have insured ample cause for the next day's repentance; and the bees were already beginning to buzz about their ears, when a messenger came spurring to the camp with intelligence, that Wyeth's people had got entangled in one of those deep and frightful ravines, piled with immense fragments of volcanic rock, which gash the whole country about the head waters of the Blackfoot River. The revel was instantly at an end; the keg of sweet and potent home-brewed was deserted; and the guests departed with all speed, to aid in extricating their companions from the volcanic ravine.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"Up and away!" is the first thought at daylight of the Indian trader, when a rival is at hand and distance is to be gained. Early in the morning, Captain Bonneville ordered the half-dried meat to be packed upon the horses, and leaving Wyeth and his party to hunt the scattered buffalo, pushed off rapidly to the east, to regain the plain of the Portneuf. His march was rugged and dangerous; through volcanic hills, broken into cliffs and precipices; and seamed with tremendous chasms, where the rocks rose like walls.

On the second day, however, he encamped once more in the plain, and as it was still early, some of the men strolled out to the neighbouring hills. In casting their eyes round the country, they perceived a great cloud of dust rising in the south, and evidently approaching. Hastening back to the camp, they gave the alarm. Preparations were instantly

made to receive an enemy; while some of the men, throwing themselves upon the “running horses” kept for hunting, galloped off to reconnoitre. In a little while, they made signals from a distance that all was friendly. By this time, the cloud of dust had swept on as if hurried along by a blast, and a band of wild horsemen came dashing at full leap into the camp, yelling and whooping like so many maniacs. Their dresses, their accoutrements, their mode of riding, and their uncouth clamour, made them seem a party of savages arrayed for war; but they proved to be principally half-breeds, and white men grown savage in the wilderness, who were employed as trappers and hunters in the service of the Hudson’s Bay Company.

Here was again “high jinks” in the camp. Captain Bonneville’s men hailed these wild scamperers as congenial spirits, or rather, as the very game birds of their class. They entertained them with the hospitality of mountaineers, feasting them at every fire. At first, there were mutual details of adventures and exploits, and broad joking mingled with peals of laughter. Then came on boasting of the comparative merits of horses and rifles, which soon engrossed every tongue. This naturally led to racing, and shooting at a mark; one trial of speed and skill succeeded another, shouts and acclamations rose from the victorious parties, fierce altercations succeeded, and a general *melée* was about to take place, when suddenly the attention of the quarrellers was arrested by a strange kind of Indian chant or chorus, that seemed to operate upon them as a charm. Their fury was at an end; a tacit reconciliation succeeded, and the ideas of the whole mongrel crowd—whites, half-breeds, and squaws—were turned in a new direction. They all formed into groups, and taking their places at the several fires, prepared for one of the most exciting amusements of the Nez Percés, and the other tribes of the Far West.

The choral chant, in fact, which had thus acted as a charm, was a kind of wild accompaniment to the favourite Indian game of “Hand.” This is played by two parties drawn out in opposite platoons before a blazing fire. It is in some respects like the old game of passing the ring or the button, and detecting the hand which holds it. In the present game, the object hidden, or the *cache*, as it is called by the trappers, is a small splint of wood, or other diminutive article, that may be concealed in the closed hand. This is passed backwards and

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forwards among the party "in hand," while the party "out of hand" guess where it is concealed. To heighten the excitement and confuse the guessers, a number of dry poles are laid before each platoon, upon which the members of the party "in hand" beat furiously with short staves, keeping time to the choral chant already mentioned, which waxes fast and furious as the game proceeds. As large bets are staked upon the game, the excitement is prodigious. Each party in turn bursts out in full chorus, beating, and yelling, and working themselves up into such a heat, that the perspiration rolls down their naked shoulders, even in the cold of a winter night. The bets are doubled and trebled as the game advances, the mental excitement increases almost to madness, and all the worldly effects of the gamblers are often hazarded upon the position of a straw.

These gambling games were kept up throughout the night; every fire glared upon a group that looked like a crew of maniacs at their frantic orgies; and the scene would have been kept up throughout the succeeding day, had not Captain Bonneville interposed his authority, and, at the usual hour, issued his marching orders.

Proceeding down the course of Snake River, the hunters regularly returned to camp in the evening laden with wild geese, which were yet scarcely able to fly, and were easily caught in great numbers. It was now the season of the annual fish-feast, with which the Indians in these parts celebrate the first appearance of the salmon in this river. These fish are taken in great numbers at the numerous falls of about four feet pitch. The Indians flank the shallow water just below, and spear them as they attempt to pass. In wide parts of the river, also, they place a sort of chevaux-de-frise, or fence, of poles interwoven with withes, and forming an angle in the middle of the current, where a small opening is left for the salmon to pass. Around this opening the Indians station themselves on small rafts, and ply their spears with great success.

The table lands so common in this region have a sandy soil, inconsiderable in depth, and covered with sage, or more properly speaking, wormwood. Below this, is a level stratum of rock, riven occasionally by frightful chasms. The whole plain rises as it approaches the river, and terminates with high and broken cliffs, difficult to pass, and in many places so precipitous, that it is impossible, for days together, to get down to

the water's edge, to give drink to the horses. This obliges the traveller occasionally to abandon the vicinity of the river, and make a wide sweep into the interior.

It was now far in the month of July, and the party suffered extremely from sultry weather and dusty travelling. The flies and gnats, too, were extremely troublesome to the horses; especially when keeping along the edge of the river where it runs between low sand-banks. Whenever the travellers encamped in the afternoon, the horses retired to the gravelly shores and remained there, without attempting to feed until the cool of the evening. As to the travellers, they plunged into the clear and cool current, to wash away the dust of the road, and refresh themselves after the heat of the day. The nights were always cool and pleasant.

At one place where they encamped for some time, the river was nearly five hundred yards wide, and studded with grassy islands, adorned with groves of willow and cotton-wood. Here the Indians were assembled in great numbers, and had barricaded the channels between the islands, to enable them to spear the salmon with greater facility. They were a timid race, and seemed unaccustomed to the sight of white men. Entering one of the huts, Captain Bonneville found the inhabitants just proceeding to cook a fine salmon. It is put into a pot filled with cold water, and hung over the fire. The moment the water begins to boil, the fish is considered cooked.

Taking his seat unceremoniously, and lighting his pipe, the captain awaited the cooking of the fish, intending to invite himself to the repast. The owner of the hut seemed to take his intrusion in good part. While conversing with him, the captain felt something move behind him, and turning round and removing a few skins and old buffalo robes, discovered a young girl, about fourteen years of age, crouched beneath, who directed her large black eyes full in his face, and continued to gaze in mute surprise and terror. The captain endeavoured to dispel her fears, and drawing a bright riband from his pocket, attempted repeatedly to tie it round her neck. She jerked back at each attempt, uttering a sound very much like a snarl; nor could all the blandishments of the captain, albeit a pleasant, good-looking, and somewhat gallant man, succeed in conquering the shiness of the savage little beauty. His attentions were now turned to the parents, whom he presented

with an awl and a little tobacco, and having thus secured their good-will, continued to smoke his pipe and watch the salmon. While thus seated near the threshold, an urchin of the family approached the door, but catching a sight of the strange guest, ran off screaming with terror, and ensconced himself behind the long straw at the back of the hut.

Desirous to dispel entirely this timidity, and to open a trade with the simple inhabitants of the hut, who, he did not doubt, had furs somewhere concealed, the captain now drew forth that grand lure in the eyes of the savage, a pocket mirror. The sight of it was irresistible. After examining it for a long time with wonder and admiration, they produced a muskrat skin, and offered it in exchange. The captain shook his head; but purchased the skin for a couple of buttons—superfluous trinkets! as the worthy lord of the hovel had neither coat nor breeches on which to place them.

The mirror still continued the great object of desire, particularly in the eyes of the old housewife, who produced a pot of parched flour and a string of biscuit roots. These procured her some trifle in return; but could not command the purchase of the mirror. The salmon being now completely cooked, they all joined heartily in supper. A bounteous portion was deposited before the captain by the old woman, upon some fresh grass, which served instead of a platter; and never had he tasted a salmon boiled so completely to his fancy.

Supper being over, the captain lighted his pipe and passed it to his host, who, inhaling the smoke, puffed it through his nostrils so assiduously, that in a little while his head manifested signs of confusion and dizziness. Being satisfied, by this time, of the kindly and companionable qualities of the captain, he became easy and communicative; and at length hinted something about exchanging beaver skins for horses. The captain at once offered to dispose of his steed, which stood fastened at the door. The bargain was soon concluded, whereupon the Indian, removing a pile of bushes under which his valuables were concealed, drew forth the number of skins agreed upon as the price.

Shortly afterwards, some of the captain's people coming up, he ordered another horse to be saddled, and mounting it, took his departure from the hut, after distributing a few trifling presents among its simple inhabitants. During all the time of his visit, the little Indian girl had kept her large black

eyes fixed upon him, almost without winking, watching every movement with awe and wonder; and as he rode off, remained gazing after him, motionless as a statue. Her father, however, delighted with his new acquaintance, mounted his newly purchased horse, and followed in the train of the captain, to whom he continued to be a faithful and useful adherent during his sojourn in the neighbourhood.

The cowardly effects of an evil conscience were evidenced in the conduct of one of the captain's men, who had been in the Californian expedition. During all their intercourse with the harmless people of this place, he had manifested uneasiness and anxiety. While his companions mingled freely and joyously with the natives, he went about with a restless, suspicious look; scrutinizing every painted form and face, and starting often at the sudden approach of some meek and inoffensive savage, who regarded him with reverence as a superior being. Yet this was ordinarily a bold fellow, who never flinched from danger, nor turned pale at the prospect of a battle. At length he requested permission of Captain Bonneville to keep out of the way of these people entirely. Their striking resemblance, he said, to the people of Ogden's River, made him continually fear that some among them might have seen him in that expedition; and might seek an opportunity of revenge. Ever after this, while they remained in this neighbourhood, he would skulk out of the way and keep aloof, when any of the native inhabitants approached. "Such," observes Captain Bonneville, "is the effect of self-reproach, even upon the roving trapper in the wilderness, who has little else to fear than the stings of his own guilty conscience."

CHAPTER XLIV.

It had been the intention of Captain Bonneville, in descending along Snake River, to scatter his trappers upon the smaller streams. In this way, a range of country is trapped by small detachments from a main body. The outfit of a trapper is generally a rifle, a pound of powder, and four pounds of lead, with a bullet-mould, seven traps, an axe, a hatchet, a knife and awl, a camp kettle, two blankets, and, where supplies are plentiful, seven pounds of flour. He has, generally, two or three horses, to carry himself, and his baggage and peltries. Two trappers commonly go together, for the purposes of mutual assistance and support; a larger party could

not easily escape the eyes of the Indians. It is a service of peril, and even more so at present than formerly, for the Indians, since they have got into the habit of trafficking peltries with the traders, have learnt the value of the beaver, and look upon the trappers as poachers, who are filching the riches from their streams, and interfering with their market. They make no hesitation, therefore, to murder the solitary trapper, and thus destroy a competitor, while they possess themselves of his spoils. It is with regret we add, too, that this hostility has in many cases been instigated by traders, desirous of injuring their rivals, but who have themselves often reaped the fruits of the mischief they have sown.

When two trappers undertake any considerable stream, their mode of proceeding is to hide their horses in some lonely glen, where they can graze unobserved. They then build a small hut, dig out a canoe from a cotton-wood tree, and in this, poke along shore silently, in the evening, and set their traps. These they revisit in the same silent way, at daybreak. When they take any beaver, they bring it home, skin it, stretch the skin on sticks to dry, and feast upon the flesh. The body, hung up before the fire, turns by its own weight, and is roasted in a superior style; the tail is the trapper's titbit; it is cut off, put on the end of a stick, and toasted, and is considered even a greater dainty than the tongue or the marrow-bone of a buffalo.

With all their silence and caution, however, the poor trappers cannot always escape their hawk-eyed enemies. Their trail has been discovered, perhaps, and followed up for many a mile; or their smoke has been seen curling up out of the secret glen, or has been scented by the savages, whose sense of smell is almost as acute as that of sight. Sometimes they are pounced upon when in the act of setting their traps; at other times, they are roused from their sleep by the horrid war-whoop; or, perhaps, have a bullet or an arrow whistling about their ears, in the midst of one of their beaver banquets. In this way they are picked off, from time to time, and nothing is known of them, until, perchance, their bones are found bleaching in some lonely ravine, or on the banks of some nameless stream, which from that time is called after them. Many of the small streams beyond the mountains thus perpetuate the names of unfortunate trappers that have been murdered on their banks.

A knowledge of these dangers deterred Captain Bonneville,

in the present instance, from detaching small parties of trappers as he had intended; for his scouts brought him word, that formidable bands of the Banneck Indians were lying on the Boisé and Payette Rivers at no great distance, so that they would be apt to detect and cut off any stragglers. It behoved him, also, to keep his party together, to guard against any predatory attack upon the main body; he continued on his way, therefore, without dividing his forces. And fortunate it was that he did so; for in a little while, he encountered one of the phenomena of the western wilds, that would effectually have prevented his scattered people from finding each other again. In a word, it was the season of setting fire to the prairies. As he advanced, he began to perceive great clouds of smoke at a distance, rising by degrees, and spreading over the whole face of the country. The atmosphere became dry and surcharged with murky vapour, parching to the skin, and irritating to the eyes. When travelling among the hills, they could scarcely discern objects at the distance of a few paces; indeed, the least exertion of the vision was painful. There was evidently some vast conflagration in the direction toward which they were proceeding; it was as yet at a great distance, and during the day, they could only see the smoke rising in larger and denser volumes, and rolling forth in an immense canopy. At night, the skies were all glowing with the reflection of unseen fires, hanging in an immense body of lurid light, high above the horizon.

Having reached Gun Creek, an important stream coming from the left, Captain Bonneville turned up its course, to traverse the mountains and avoid the great bend of Snake River. Being now out of the range of the Bannecks, he sent out his people in all directions to hunt the antelope for present supplies; keeping the dried meats for places where game might be scarce.

During four days that the party were ascending Gun Creek the smoke continued to increase so rapidly, that it was impossible to distinguish the face of the country and ascertain landmarks. Fortunately, the travellers fell upon an Indian trail, which led them to the head waters of the Fourche de Glace or Ice River, sometimes called the Grand Rond. Here they found all the plains and valleys wrapped in one vast conflagration; which swept over the long grass in billows of flame, shot up every bush and tree, rose in great columns from the groves, and sent up clouds of smoke that darkened

the atmosphere. To avoid this sea of fire, the travellers had to pursue their course close along the foot of the mountains; but the irritation from the smoke continued to be tormenting.

The country about the head waters of the Grand Rond, spreads out into broad and level prairies, extremely fertile, and watered by mountain springs and rivulets. These prairies are resorted to by small bands of the Skynses, to pasture their horses, as well as to banquet upon the salmon which abound in the neighbouring waters. They take these fish in great quantities and without the least difficulty; simply taking them out of the water with their hands, as they flounder and struggle in the numerous long shoals of the principal streams. At the time the travellers passed over these prairies, some of the narrow deep streams by which they were intersected were completely choked with salmon, which they took in great numbers. The wolves and bears frequent these streams at this season, to avail themselves of these great fisheries.

The travellers continued, for many days, to experience great difficulties and discomforts from this wide conflagration, which seemed to embrace the whole wilderness. The sun was for a great part of the time obscured by the smoke, and the loftiest mountains were hidden from view. Blundering along in this region of mist and uncertainty, they were frequently obliged to make long circuits, to avoid obstacles which they could not perceive until close upon them. The Indian trails were their safest guides, for though they sometimes appeared to lead them out of their direct course, they always conducted them to the passes.

On the 26th of August, they reached the head of the Waylee-way River. Here, in a valley of the mountains through which this head water makes its way, they found a band of the Skynses, who were extremely sociable, and appeared to be well disposed, and, as they spoke the Nez Percé language, an intercourse was easily kept up with them.

In the pastures on the bank of this stream, Captain Bonneville encamped for a time, for the purpose of recruiting the strength of his horses. Scouts were now sent out to explore the surrounding country, and search for a convenient pass through the mountains towards the Wallamut or Multnomah. After an absence of twenty days, they returned weary and discouraged. They had been harassed and perplexed in rugged mountain defiles, where their progress was continually

impeded by rocks and precipices. Often they had been obliged to travel along the edges of frightful ravines, where a false step would have been fatal. In one of these passes, a horse fell from the brink of a precipice, and would have been dashed to pieces, had he not lodged among the branches of a tree, from which he was extricated with great difficulty. These, however, were not the worst of their difficulties and perils. The great conflagration of the country, which had harassed the main party in its march, was still more awful the further this exploring party proceeded. The flames, which swept rapidly over the light vegetation of the prairies, assumed a fiercer character, and took a stronger hold, amidst the wooded glens and ravines of the mountains. Some of the deep gorges and defiles sent up sheets of flame, and clouds of lurid smoke, and sparks and cinders, that in the night made them resemble the craters of volcanos. The groves and forests, too, which crowned the cliffs, shot up their towering columns of fire, and added to the furnace glow of the mountains. With these stupendous sights were combined the rushing blasts caused by the rarefied air, which roared and howled through the narrow glens, and whirled forth the smoke and flames in impetuous wreaths. Ever and anon, too, was heard the crash of falling trees, sometimes tumbling from crags and precipices, with tremendous sounds.

In the daytime, the mountains were wrapped in smoke so dense and blinding, that the explorers, if by chance they separated, could only find each other by shouting. Often, too, they had to grope their way through the yet burning forests, in constant peril from the limbs and trunks of trees, which frequently fell across their path. At length they gave up the attempt to find a pass as hopeless, under actual circumstances, and made their way back to the camp to report their failure.

CHAPTER XLV.

DURING the absence of this detachment, a sociable intercourse had been kept up between the main party and the Skynses, who had removed into the neighbourhood of the camp. These people dwell about the waters of the Way-lee-way and the adjacent country, and trade regularly with the Hudson's Bay Company; generally giving horses in exchange for the articles of which they stand in need. They bring beaver skins, also, to the trading posts; not procured by trapping, but by a

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course of internal traffic with the shy and ignorant Shoshokoes and Too-el-icans, who keep in distant and unfrequented parts of the country, and will not venture near the trading houses. The Skynses hunt the deer and elk, occasionally; and depend for a part of the year, on fishing. Their main subsistence, however, is upon roots, especially the kamash. This bulbous root is said to be of a delicious flavour, and highly nutritious. The women dig it up in great quantities, steam it, and deposit it in caches for winter provisions. It grows spontaneously, and absolutely covers the plains.

This tribe were comfortably clad and equipped. They had a few rifles among them, and were extremely desirous of bartering for those of Captain Bonneville's men; offering a couple of good running horses for a light rifle. Their first-rate horses, however, were not to be procured from them on any terms. They almost invariably use ponies; but of a breed infinitely superior to any in the United States. They are fond of trying their speed and bottom, and of betting upon them.

As Captain Bonneville was desirous of judging of the comparative merit of their horses, he purchased one of their racers, and had a trial of speed between that, an American, and a Shoshonie, which were supposed to be well matched. The race course was for the distance of one mile and a half out and back. For the first half mile, the American took the lead, by a few hands; but losing his wind, soon fell far behind; leaving the Shoshonie and Skynse to contend together. For a mile and a half, they went head and head; but at the turn, the Skynse took the lead, and won the race with great ease; scarce drawing a quick breath when all was over.

The Skynses, like the Nez Percés and the Flatheads, have a strong devotional feeling, which has been successfully cultivated by some of the resident personages of the Hudson's Bay Company. Sunday is invariably kept sacred among these tribes. They will not raise their camp on that day, unless in extreme cases of danger or hunger: neither will they hunt, nor fish, nor trade, nor perform any kind of labour on that day. A part of it is passed in prayer and religious ceremonies. Some chief, who is, generally, at the same time what is called a "medicine man," assembles the community. After invoking blessings from the Deity, he addresses the assemblage; exhorting them to good conduct; to be diligent in providing for their families; to abstain from lying and stealing; to avoid quarrelling or cheating in their play, and to be just and

hospitable to all strangers who may be among them. Prayers and exhortations are also made, early in the morning, on week days. Sometimes, all this is done by the chief, from horse-back; moving slowly about the camp, with his hat on, and uttering his exhortations with a loud voice. On all occasions, the bystanders listen with profound attention; and at the end of every sentence, respond one word in unison; apparently equivalent to an amen. While these prayers and exhortations are going on, every employment in the camp is suspended. If an Indian is riding by the place, he dismounts, holds his horse, and attends with reverence until all is done. When the chief has finished his prayer or exhortation, he says, "I have done;" upon which there is a general exclamation in unison.

With these religious services, probably derived from the white men, the tribes above-mentioned mingle some of their old Indian ceremonials; such as dancing to the cadence of a song or ballad; which is generally done in a large lodge, provided for the purpose. Besides Sundays, they likewise observe the cardinal holidays of the Roman Catholic Church.

Whoever has introduced these simple forms of religion among these poor savages, has evidently understood their characters and capacities, and effected a great melioration of their manners. Of this, we speak not merely from the testimony of Captain Bonneville, but, likewise, from that of Mr. Wyeth, who passed some months in a travelling camp of the Flatheads. "During the time I have been with them," says he, "I have never known an instance of theft among them: the least thing, even to a bead or pin, is brought to you, if found; and often, things that have been thrown away. Neither have I known any quarrelling, nor lying. This absence of all quarrelling the more surprised me, when I came to see the various occasions that would have given rise to it among the whites: the crowding together of from twelve to eighteen hundred horses, which have to be driven into camp at night, to be picketed; to be packed in the morning; the gathering of fuel in places where it is extremely scanty. All this, however, is done without confusion or disturbance.

"They have a mild, playful, laughing disposition; and this is portrayed in their countenances. They are polite and unobtrusive. When one speaks, the rest pay strict attention: when he is done, another assents by 'yes,' or dissents by 'no;' and then states his reasons, which are listened to with

equal attention. Even the children are more peaceable than other children. I never heard an angry word among them, nor any quarrelling; although there were, at least, five hundred of them together, and continually at play. With all this quietness of spirit, they are brave when put to the test; and are an overmatch for an equal number of Blackfeet."

The foregoing observations, though gathered from Mr. Wyeth as relative to the Flatheads, apply in the main, to the Skynses also. Captain Bonneville, during his sojourn with the latter, took constant occasion, in conversing with their principal men, to encourage them in the cultivation of moral and religious habits; drawing a comparison between their peaceable and comfortable course of life, and that of other tribes, and attributing it to their superior sense of morality and religion. He frequently attended their religious services, with his people; always enjoining on the latter the most reverential deportment; and he observed that the poor Indians were always pleased to have the white men present.

The disposition of these tribes is evidently favourable to a considerable degree of civilization. A few farmers, settled among them, might lead them, Captain Bonneville thinks, to till the earth and cultivate grain; the country of the Skynses, and Nez Percés, is admirably adapted for the raising of cattle. A Christian missionary or two, and some trifling assistance from government, to protect them from the predatory and warlike tribes, might lay the foundation of a Christian people in the midst of the great western wilderness, who would "wear the Americans near their hearts."

We must not omit to observe, however, in qualification of the sanctity of this Sabbath in the wilderness, that these tribes, who are all ardently addicted to gambling and horse-racing, make Sunday a peculiar day for recreations of the kind, not deeming them in anywise out of season. "After prayers and pious ceremonials are over, there is scarce an hour in the day," says Captain Bonneville, "that you do not see several horses racing at full speed; and in every corner of the camp, are groups of gamblers, ready to stake everything upon the all-absorbing game of hand." "The Indians," says Wyeth, "appear to enjoy their amusements with more zest than the whites. They are great gamblers; and in proportion to their means, play bolder, and bet higher than white men."

The cultivation of the religious feeling, above noted, among

the savages, has been, at times, a convenient policy, with some of the more knowing traders ; who have derived great credit and influence among them, by being considered " medicine men ;" that is, men gifted with mysterious knowledge. This feeling is, also, at times, played upon by religious charlatans ; who are to be found in savage, as well as civilized life. One of these was noted by Wyeth, during his sojourn among the Flatheads. " A new great man," says he, " is rising in the camp, who aims at power and sway. He covers his designs under the ample cloak of religion ; inculcating some new doctrines and ceremonials among those who are more simple than himself. He has already made proselytes of one-fifth of the camp ; beginning by working on the women, the children, and the weak-minded. His followers are all dancing on the plain, to their own vocal music. The more knowing ones of the tribe look on and laugh ; thinking it all too foolish to do harm ; but they will soon find that women, children, and fools, form a large majority of every community, and they will have, eventually, to follow the new light, or be considered among the profane. As soon as a preacher, or pseudo-prophet of the kind, gets followers enough, he either takes command of the tribe, or branches off and sets up for an independent chief and ' medicine man.' "

CHAPTER XLVI.

PROVISIONS were now growing scanty in the camp, and Captain Bonneville found it necessary to seek a new neighbourhood. Taking leave, therefore, of his friends the Skynses, he set off to the westward, and, crossing a low range of mountains, encamped on the head waters of the Ottolais. Being now within thirty miles of Fort Wallah-Wallah, the trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company, he sent a small detachment of men thither, to purchase corn for the subsistence of his party. The men were well received at the fort ; but all supplies for their camp were peremptorily refused. Tempting offers were made them, however, if they would leave their present employ, and enter into the service of the company ; but they were not to be seduced.

When Captain Bonneville saw his messengers return empty-handed, he ordered an instant move, for there was imminent danger of famine. He pushed forward down the course of the

Ottolais, which runs diagonal to the Columbia, and falls into it about fifty miles below the Wallah-Wallah. His route lay through a beautiful undulating country, covered with horses belonging to the Skynses, who sent them there for pasturage.

On reaching the Columbia, Captain Bonneville hoped to open a trade with the natives, for fish and other provisions; but to his surprise, they kept aloof, and even hid themselves on his approach. He soon discovered that they were under the influence of the Hudson's Bay Company, who had forbidden them to trade, or hold any communion with him. He proceeded along the Columbia, but it was everywhere the same; not an article of provisions was to be obtained from the natives, and he was, at length, obliged to kill a couple of his horses to sustain his famishing people. He now came to a halt, and consulted what was to be done. The broad and beautiful Columbia lay before them, smooth and unruffled as a mirror; a little more journeying would take them to its lower region; to the noble valley of the Wallamut, their projected winter quarters. To advance under present circumstances would be to court starvation. The resources of the country were locked against them, by the influence of a jealous and powerful monopoly. If they reached the Wallamut, they could scarcely hope to obtain sufficient supplies for the winter; if they lingered any longer in the country, the snows would gather upon the mountains and cut off their retreat. By hastening their return, they would be able to reach the Blue Mountains just in time to find the elk, the deer, and the bighorn; and after they had supplied themselves with provisions, they might push through the mountains before they were entirely blocked up by snow. Influenced by these considerations, Captain Bonneville reluctantly turned his back a second time on the Columbia, and set off for the Blue Mountains. He took his course up John Day's River, so called from one of the hunters in the original Astorian enterprise. As famine was at his heels, he travelled fast, and reached the mountains by the 1st of October. He entered by the opening made by John Day's River; it was a rugged and difficult defile, but he and his men had become accustomed to hard scrambles of the kind. Fortunately, the September rains had extinguished the fires which recently spread over these regions; and the mountains, no longer wrapped in smoke, now revealed all their grandeur and sublimity to the eye.

They were disappointed in their expectation of finding abundant game in the mountains; large bands of the natives had passed through, returning from their fishing expeditions, and had driven all the game before them. It was only now and then that the hunters could bring in sufficient to keep the party from starvation.

To add to their distress, they mistook their route, and wandered for ten days among high and bald hills of clay. At length, after much perplexity, they made their way to the banks of Snake River, following the course of which, they were sure to reach their place of destination.

It was the 20th October when they found themselves once more upon this noted stream. The Shoshokoes, whom they had met with in such scanty numbers on their journey down the river, now absolutely thronged its banks to profit by the abundance of salmon, and lay up a stock for winter provisions. Scaffolds were everywhere erected, and immense quantities of fish drying upon them. At this season of the year, however, the salmon are extremely poor, and the travellers needed their keen sauce of hunger to give them a relish.

In some places the shores were completely covered with a stratum of dead salmon, exhausted in ascending the river, or destroyed at the falls; the fetid odour of which tainted the air.

It was not until the travellers reached the head waters of the Portneuf, that they really found themselves in a region of abundance. Here the buffalo were in immense herds; and here they remained for three days, slaying and cooking, and feasting, and indemnifying themselves by an enormous carnival for a long and hungry Lent. Their horses, too, found good pasturage, and enjoyed a little rest after a severe spell of hard travelling.

During this period, two horsemen arrived at the camp, who proved to be messengers sent express for supplies from Montero's party; which had been sent to beat up the Crow country and the Black Hills, and to winter on the Arkansas. They reported that all was well with the party, but that they had not been able to accomplish the whole of their mission, and were still in the Crow country, where they should remain until joined by Captain Bonneville in the spring. The captain detained the messengers with him until the 17th of November, when, having reached the caches on Bear River, and pro-

cured thence the required supplies, he sent them back to their party; appointing a rendezvous towards the last of June following, on the forks of Wind River valley, in the Crow country.

He now remained several days encamped near the caches, and having discovered a small band of Shoshonies in his neighbourhood, purchased from them lodges, furs, and other articles of winter comfort, and arranged with them to encamp together during the winter.

The place designed by the captain for the wintering ground was on the upper part of Bear River, some distance off. He delayed approaching it as long as possible, in order to avoid driving off the buffalo, which would be needed for winter provisions. He accordingly moved forward but slowly, merely as the want of game and grass obliged him to shift his position.

The weather had already become extremely cold, and the snow lay to a considerable depth. To enable the horses to carry as much dried meat as possible, he caused a cache to be made, in which all the baggage that could be spared was deposited. This done, the party continued to move slowly toward their winter quarters.

They were not doomed, however, to suffer from scarcity during the present winter. The people upon Snake River having chased off the buffalo before the snow had become deep, immense herds now came trooping over the mountains; forming dark masses on their sides, from which their deep-mouthed bellowing sounded like the low peals and mutterings from a gathering thunder-cloud. In effect, the cloud broke, and down came the torrent thundering into the valley. It is utterly impossible, according to Captain Bonneville, to convey an idea of the effect produced by the sight of such countless throngs of animals of such bulk and spirit, all rushing forward as if swept on by a whirlwind.

The long privation which the travellers had suffered gave uncommon ardour to their present hunting. One of the Indians attached to the party, finding himself on horseback in the midst of the buffaloes, without either rifle or bow and arrows, dashed after a fine cow that was passing close by him, and plunged his knife into her side with such lucky aim as to bring her to the ground. It was a daring deed; but hunger had made him almost desperate.

The buffaloes are sometimes tenacious of life, and must

be wounded in particular parts. A ball striking the shagged frontlet of a bull, produces no other effect than a toss of the head, and greater exasperation; on the contrary, a ball striking the forehead of a cow, is fatal. Several instances occurred during this great hunting bout, of bulls fighting furiously after having received mortal wounds. Wyeth, also, was witness to an instance of the kind while encamped with Indians. During a grand hunt of the buffalo, one of the Indians pressed a bull so closely that the animal turned suddenly upon him. His horse stopped short, or started back, and threw him. Before he could rise, the bull rushed furiously upon him, and gored him in the chest, so that his breath came out at the aperture. He was conveyed back to the camp, and his wound was dressed. Giving himself up for slain, he called round him his friends, and made his will by word of mouth. It was something like a death chant, and at the end of every sentence those around responded in concord. He appeared no ways intimidated by the approach of death. "I think," adds Wyeth, "the Indians die better than the white men; perhaps, from having less fear about the future."

The buffalo may be approached very near, if the hunter keeps to the leeward; but they are quick of scent, and will take the alarm and move off from a party of hunters to the windward, even when two miles distant.

The vast herds which had poured down into the Bear River valley, were now snow-bound, and remained in the neighbourhood of the camp throughout the winter. This furnished the trappers and their Indian friends a perpetual carnival; so that to slay and eat seemed to be the main occupations of the day. It is astonishing what loads of meat it requires to cope with the appetite of a hunting camp.

The ravens and wolves soon came in for their share of the good cheer. These constant attendants of the hunter gathered in vast numbers as the winter advanced. They might be completely out of sight, but at the report of a gun, flights of ravens would immediately be seen hovering in the air, no one knew whence they came; while the sharp visages of the wolves would peep down from the brow of every hill, waiting for the hunter's departure, to pounce upon the carcass.

Beside the buffaloes, there were other neighbours snow-bound in the valley, whose presence did not promise to be so advantageous. This was a band of Eutaw Indians, who were

encamped higher up on the river. They are a poor tribe, that, in a scale of the various tribes inhabiting these regions, would rank between the Shoshonies and the Shoshokoes or Root Diggers; though more bold and warlike than the latter. They have but few rifles among them, and are generally armed with bows and arrows.

As this band and the Shoshonies were at deadly feud, on account of old grievances, and as neither party stood in awe of the other, it was feared some bloody scenes might ensue. Captain Bonneville, therefore, undertook the office of pacificator, and sent to the Eutaw chiefs, inviting them to a friendly smoke, in order to bring about a reconciliation. His invitation was proudly declined; whereupon he went to them in person, and succeeded in effecting a suspension of hostilities until the chiefs of the two tribes could meet in council. The braves of the two rival camps sullenly acquiesced in the arrangement. They would take their seats upon the hill tops, and watch their quondam enemies hunting the buffalo in the plain below, and evidently repine that their hands were tied up from a skirmish. The worthy captain, however, succeeded in carrying through his benevolent mediation. The chiefs met; the amicable pipe was smoked, the hatchet buried, and peace formally proclaimed. After this, both camps united and mingled in social intercourse. Private quarrels, however, would occasionally occur in hunting, about the division of the game, and blows would sometimes be exchanged over the carcass of a buffalo; but the chiefs wisely took no notice of these individual brawls.

One day, the scouts, who had been ranging the hills, brought news of several large herds of antelopes in a small valley at no great distance. This produced a sensation among the Indians, for both tribes were in ragged condition, and sadly in want of those shirts made of the skin of the antelope. It was determined to have "a surround," as the mode of hunting that animal is called. Everything now assumed an air of mystic solemnity and importance. The chiefs prepared their medicines or charms, each according to his own method, or fancied inspiration, generally with the compound of certain simples; others consulted the entrails of animals which they had sacrificed, and thence drew favourable auguries. After much grave smoking and deliberating, it was at length proclaimed that all who were able to lift a club,

man, woman, or child, should muster for "the surround." When all had congregated, they moved in rude procession to the nearest point of the valley in question, and there halted. Another course of smoking and deliberating, of which the Indians are so fond, took place among the chiefs. Directions were then issued for the horsemen to make a circuit of about seven miles, so as to encompass the herd. When this was done, the whole mounted force dashed off, simultaneously, at full speed, shouting and yelling at the top of their voices. In a short space of time, the antelopes, startled from their hiding places, came bounding from all points into the valley. The riders, now gradually contracting their circle, brought them nearer and nearer to the spot, where the senior chief, surrounded by the elders, male and female, was seated in supervision of the chase. The antelopes, nearly exhausted with fatigue and fright, and bewildered by perpetual whooping, made no effort to break through the ring of the hunters, but ran round in small circles, until man, woman, and child, beat them down with bludgeons. Such is the nature of that species of antelope hunting, technically called "a surround."

CHAPTER XLVII.

GAME continued to abound throughout the winter; and the camp was overstocked with provisions. Beef and venison, humps and haunches, buffalo tongues and marrow-bones, were constantly cooking at every fire; and the whole atmosphere was redolent with the savoury fumes of roast meat. It was, indeed, a continual "feast of fat things," and though there might be a lack of "wine upon the lees," yet, we have shown that a substitute was occasionally to be found in honey and alcohol.

Both the Shoshonies and the Eutaws conducted themselves with great propriety. It is true, they now and then filched a few trifles from their good friends, the Big Hearts, when their backs were turned; but then, they always treated them, to their faces, with the utmost deference and respect; and good-humouredly vied with the trappers in all kinds of feats of activity and mirthful sports. The two tribes maintained towards each other, also, a friendliness of aspect, which gave Captain Bonneville reason to hope that all past animosity was effectually buried.

The two rival bands, however, had not long been mingled in this social manner, before their ancient jealousy began to break out, in a new form. The senior chief of the Shoshonies was a thinking man, and a man of observation. He had been among the Nez Percés, listened to their new code of morality and religion received from the white men, and attended their devotional exercises. He had observed the effect of all this, in elevating the tribe in the estimation of the white men; and determined, by the same means, to gain for his own tribe a superiority over their ignorant rivals, the Eutaws. He accordingly assembled his people, and promulgated among them the mongrel doctrines and form of worship of the Nez Percés; recommending the same to their adoption. The Shoshonies were struck with the novelty, at least, of the measure, and entered into it with spirit. They began to observe Sundays and holidays, and to have their devotional dances, and chants, and other ceremonials, about which the ignorant Eutaws knew nothing; while they exerted their usual competition in shooting and horse-racing, and the renowned game of hand.

Matters were going on thus pleasantly and prosperously, in this motley community of white and red men, when, one morning, two stark free trappers, arrayed in the height of savage finery, and mounted on steeds as fine and as fiery as themselves, and all jingling with hawks' bells, came galloping, with whoop and halloo, into the camp.

They were fresh from the winter encampment of the American Fur Company, in the Green River valley; and had come to pay their old comrades of Captain Bonneville's company a visit. An idea may be formed, from the scenes we have already given of conviviality in the wilderness, of the manner in which these game birds were received by those of their feather in the camp; what feasting, what revelling, what boasting, what bragging, what ranting and roaring, and racing and gambling, and squabbling and fighting, ensued among these boon companions. Captain Bonneville, it is true, maintained always a certain degree of law and order in his camp, and checked each fierce excess; but the trappers, in their seasons of idleness and relaxation, require a degree of licence and indulgence, to repay them for the long privations, and almost incredible hardships of their periods of active service.

In the midst of all this feasting and frolicking, a freak of the tender passion intervened, and wrought a complete change

in the scene. Among the Indian beauties in the camp of the Eutaws and Shoshonies, the free trappers discovered two, who had whilom figured as their squaws. These connections frequently take place for a season, and sometimes continue for years, if not perpetually; but are apt to be broken when the free trapper starts off, suddenly, on some distant and rough expedition.

In the present instance, these wild blades were anxious to regain their belles; nor were the latter loath once more to come under their protection. The free trapper combines, in the eye of an Indian girl, all that is dashing and heroic in a warrior of her own race, whose gait, and garb, and bravery he emulates, with all that is gallant and glorious in the white man. And then the indulgence with which he treats her, the finery in which he decks her out, the state in which she moves, the sway she enjoys over both his purse and person, instead of being the drudge and slave of an Indian husband, obliged to carry his pack, and build his lodge, and make his fire, and bear his cross humours and dry blows. No; there is no comparison, in the eyes of an aspiring belle of the wilderness, between a free trapper and an Indian brave.

With respect to one of the parties, the matter was easily arranged. The beauty in question was a pert little Eutaw wench, that had been taken prisoner, in some war excursion, by a Shoshonie. She was readily ransomed for a few articles of trifling value; and forthwith figured about the camp in fine array, "with rings on her fingers, and bells on her toes," and a tossed-up coquettish air, that made her the envy, admiration, and abhorrence, of all the leathern-dressed, hard-working squaws of her acquaintance.

As to the other beauty, it was quite a different matter. She had become the wife of a Shoshonie brave. It is true, he had another wife, of older date than the one in question; who, therefore, took command in his household, and treated his new spouse as a slave; but the latter was the wife of his last fancy, his latest caprice; and was precious in his eyes. All attempt to bargain with him, therefore, was useless; the very proposition was repulsed with anger and disdain. The spirit of the trapper was roused, his pride was piqued as well as his passion. He endeavoured to prevail upon his quondam mistress to elope with him. His horses were fleet, the winter nights were long and dark, before daylight they would be be-

yond the reach of pursuit; and once at the encampment in Green River valley, they might set the whole band of Shoshonies at defiance.

The Indian girl listened and longed. Her heart yearned after the ease and splendour of condition of a trapper's bride, and throbbed to be freed from the capricious control of the premier squaw; but she dreaded the failure of the plan, and the fury of a Shoshonie husband. They parted; the Indian girl in tears, and the madcap trapper more mad than ever, with his thwarted passion.

Their interviews had, probably, been detected, and the jealousy of the Shoshonie brave aroused: a clamour of angry voices was heard in his lodge, with the sound of blows, and of female weeping and lamenting. At night, as the trapper lay tossing on his pallet, a soft voice whispered at the door of his lodge. His mistress stood trembling before him. She was ready to follow whithersoever he should lead.

In an instant, he was up and out. He had two prime horses, sure, and swift of foot, and of great wind. With stealthy quiet, they were brought up and saddled; and, in a few moments, he and his prize were careering over the snow, with which the whole country was covered. In the eagerness of escape, they had made no provision for their journey; days must elapse before they could reach their haven of safety, and mountains and prairies be traversed, wrapped in all the desolation of winter. For the present, however, they thought of nothing but flight; urging their horses forward over the dreary wastes, and fancying, in the howling of every blast, they heard the yell of the pursuer.

At early dawn, the Shoshonie became aware of his loss. Mounting his swiftest horse, he set off in hot pursuit. He soon found the trail of the fugitives, and spurred on in hopes of overtaking them. The winds, however, which swept the valley, had drifted the light snow into the prints made by the horses' hoofs. In a little while, he lost all trace of them, and was completely thrown out of the chase. He knew, however, the situation of the camp toward which they were bound, and a direct course through the mountains, by which he might arrive there sooner than the fugitives. Through the most rugged defiles, therefore, he urged his course by day and night, scarce pausing until he reached the camp. It was some time before the fugitives made their appearance. Six days

had they been traversing the wintry wilds. They came, haggard with hunger and fatigue, and their horses faltering under them. The first object that met their eyes, on entering the camp, was the Shoshonie brave. He rushed, knife in hand, to plunge it in the heart that had proved false to him. The trapper threw himself before the cowering form of his mistress, and, exhausted as he was, prepared for a deadly struggle. The Shoshonie paused. His habitual awe of the white man checked his arm; the trapper's friends crowded to the spot, and arrested him. A parley ensued. A kind of crim. con. adjudication took place, such as frequently occurs in civilized life. A couple of horses were declared to be a fair compensation for the loss of a woman who had previously lost her heart; with this, the Shoshonie brave was fain to pacify his passion. He returned to Captain Bonneville's camp, somewhat crest-fallen, it is true; but parried the officious condolences of his friends, by observing, that two good horses were very good pay for one bad wife.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE winter was now breaking up, the snows were melted from the hills, and from the lower parts of the mountains, and the time for decamping had arrived. Captain Bonneville dispatched a party to the caches, who brought away all the effects concealed there, and on the 1st of April (1835) the camp was broken up, and every one on the move. The white men and their allies, the Eutaws and Shoshonies, parted with many regrets and sincere expressions of good-will, for their intercourse throughout the winter had been of the most friendly kind.

Captain Bonneville and his party passed by Ham's Fork, and reached the Colorado, or Green River, without accident, on the banks of which they remained during the residue of the spring. During this time, they were conscious that a band of hostile Indians were hovering about their vicinity, watching for an opportunity to slay or steal; but the vigilant precautions of Captain Bonneville baffled all their manœuvres. In such dangerous times, the experienced mountaineer is never without his rifle, even in camp. On going from lodge to lodge to visit his comrades, he takes it with him. On seating himself in a lodge, he lays it beside him, ready to be snatched

up ; when he goes out, he takes it up as regularly as a citizen would his walking staff. His rifle is his constant friend and protector.

On the 10th of June, the party were a little to the east of the Wind River Mountains, where they halted for a time in excellent pasturage, to give their horses a chance to recruit their strength for a long journey ; for it was Captain Bonneville's intention to shape his course to the settlements ; having already been detained by the complication of his duties, and by various losses and impediments, far beyond the time specified in his leave of absence.

While the party was thus reposing in the neighbourhood of the Wind River Mountains, a solitary free trapper rode one day into the camp, and accosted Captain Bonneville. He belonged, he said, to a party of thirty hunters, who had just passed through the neighbourhood, but whom he had abandoned in consequence of their ill-treatment of a brother trapper ; whom they had cast off from their party, and left with his bag and baggage, and an Indian wife into the bargain, in the midst of a desolate prairie. The horseman gave a piteous account of the situation of this helpless pair, and solicited the loan of horses to bring them and their effects to the camp.

The captain was not a man to refuse assistance to any one in distress, especially when there was a woman in the case ; horses were immediately dispatched, with an escort, to aid the unfortunate couple. The next day, they made their appearance with all their effects : the man, a stalwart mountaineer, with a peculiarly game look ; the woman, a young Blackfoot beauty, arrayed in the trappings and trinketry of a free trapper's bride.

Finding the woman to be quick-witted and communicative, Captain Bonneville entered into conversation with her, and obtained from her many particulars concerning the habits and customs of her tribe ; especially their wars and huntings. They pride themselves upon being the "best legs of the mountains," and hunt the buffalo on foot. This is done in spring time, when the frosts have thawed and the ground is soft. The heavy buffalo then sink over their hoofs at every step and are easily overtaken by the Blackfeet ; whose fleet steps press lightly on the surface. It is said, however, that the buffalo on the Pacific side of the Rocky Mountains are fleetier and more active than on the Atlantic side ; those upon the

plains of the Columbia can scarcely be overtaken by a horse that would outstrip the same animal in the neighbourhood of the Platte, the usual hunting ground of the Blackfeet. In the course of further conversation, Captain Bonneville drew from the Indian woman her whole story, which gave a picture of savage life, and of the drudgery and hardships to which an Indian wife is subject.

"I was the wife," said she, "of a Blackfoot warrior, and I served him faithfully. Who was so well served as he? Whose lodge was so well provided, or kept so clean? I brought wood in the morning, and placed water always at hand. I watched for his coming; and he found his meat cooked and ready. If he rose to go forth, there was nothing to delay him. I searched the thought that was in his heart, to save him the trouble of speaking. When I went abroad on errands for him, the chiefs and warriors smiled upon me, and the young braves spoke soft things in secret; but my feet were in the straight path, and my eyes could see nothing but him.

"When he went out to hunt, or to war, who aided to equip him, but I? When he returned, I met him at the door; I took his gun; and he entered without further thought. While he sat and smoked, I unloaded his horses; tied them to the stakes; brought in their loads, and was quickly at his feet. If his moccasins were wet, I took them off and put on others which were dry and warm. I dressed all the skins he had taken in the chase. He could never say to me, why is it not done? He hunted the deer, the antelope, and the buffalo, and he watched the enemy. Everything else was done by me. When our people moved their camp, he mounted his horse and rode away; free as though he had fallen from the skies. He had nothing to do with the labour of the camp; it was I that packed the horses, and led them on the journey. When we halted in the evening, and he sat with the other braves and smoked, it was I that pitched his lodge; and when he came to eat and sleep, his supper and his bed were ready.

"I served him faithfully; and what was my reward? A cloud was always on his brow, and sharp lightning on his tongue. I was his dog, and not his wife.

"Who was it that scarred and bruised me? It was he. My brother saw how I was treated. His heart was big for me. He begged me to leave my tyrant and fly. Where could I

go? If retaken, who would protect me? My brother was not a chief; he could not save me from blows and wounds, perhaps death. At length I was persuaded. I followed my brother from the village. He pointed the way to the Nez Percés, and bade me go and live in peace among them. We parted. On the third day I saw the lodges of the Nez Percés before me. I paused for a moment, and had no heart to go on; but my horse neighed, and I took it as a good sign, and suffered him to gallop forward. In a little while I was in the midst of the lodges. As I sat silent on my horse, the people gathered round me, and inquired whence I came. I told my story. A chief now wrapped his blanket close around him, and bade me dismount. I obeyed. He took my horse to lead him away. My heart grew small within me. I felt, on parting with my horse, as if my last friend was gone. I had no words, and my eyes were dry. As he led off my horse, a young brave stepped forward. 'Are you a chief of the people?' cried he. 'Do we listen to you in council, and follow you in battle? Behold! a stranger flies to our camp from the dogs of Blackfeet, and asks protection. Let shame cover your face. The stranger is a woman, and alone. If she were a warrior, or had a warrior by her side, your heart would not be big enough to take her horse. But he is yours. By the right of war you may claim him; but look!—his bow was drawn, and the arrow ready!—'you never shall cross his back!' The arrow pierced the heart of the horse, and he fell dead.

"An old woman said she would be my mother. She led me to her lodge: my heart was thawed by her kindness, and my eyes burst forth with tears; like the frozen fountains in spring time. She never changed; but as the days passed away, was still a mother to me. The people were loud in praise of the young brave, and the chief was ashamed, I lived in peace.

"A party of trappers came to the village, and one of them took me for his wife. This is he. I am very happy; he treats me with kindness, and I have taught him the language of my people. As we were travelling this way, some of the Blackfeet warriors beset us, and carried off the horses of the party. We followed, and my husband held a parley with them. The guns were laid down, and the pipe was lighted; but some of the white men attempted to seize the horses by force, and then a battle began. The snow was deep; the white men sank into it at every step; but the red men, with their snow-

shoes, passed over the surface like birds, and drove off many of the horses in sight of their owners. With those that remained we resumed our journey. At length words took place between the leader of the party and my husband. He took away our horses, which had escaped in the battle, and turned us from his camp. My husband had one good friend among the trappers. That is he (pointing to the man who had asked assistance for them). He is a good man. His heart is big. When he came in from hunting, and found that we had been driven away, he gave up all his wages, and followed us, that he might speak good words for us to the white captain."

CHAPTER XLIX.

ON the 22nd of June, Captain Bonneville raised his camp, and moved to the forks of Wind River; the appointed place of rendezvous. In a few days, he was joined there by the brigade of Montero, which had been sent, in the preceding year, to beat up the Crow country, and afterwards proceed to the Arkansas. Montero had followed the early part of his instructions; after trapping upon some of the upper streams, he proceeded to Powder River. Here he fell in with the Crow villages or bands, who treated him with unusual kindness, and prevailed upon him to take up his winter quarters among them.

The Crows, at that time, were struggling almost for existence with their old enemies, the Blackfeet; who, in the past year, had picked off the flower of their warriors in various engagements, and among the rest, Arapooish, the friend of the white men. That sagacious and magnanimous chief had beheld, with grief, the ravages which war was making in his tribe, and that it was declining in force, and must eventually be destroyed, unless some signal blow could be struck to retrieve its fortunes. In a pitched battle of the two tribes, he made a speech to his warriors, urging them to set everything at hazard in one furious charge; which done, he led the way into the thickest of the foe. He was soon separated from his men, and fell covered with wounds, but his self-devotion was not in vain. The Blackfeet were defeated; and from that time the Crows plucked up fresh heart, and were frequently successful.

Montero had not been long encamped among them, when

he discovered that the Blackfeet were hovering about the neighbourhood. One day the hunters came galloping into the camp, and proclaimed that a band of the enemy was at hand. The Crows flew to arms, leaped on their horses, and dashed out in squadrons in pursuit. They overtook the retreating enemy in the midst of a plain. A desperate fight ensued. The Crows had the advantage of numbers, and of fighting on horseback. The greater part of the Blackfeet were slain; the remnant took shelter in a close thicket of willows, where the horse could not enter; whence they plied their bows vigorously.

The Crows drew off out of bow shot, and endeavoured, by taunts and bravadoes, to draw the warriors out of their retreat. A few of the best mounted among them, rode apart from the rest. One of their number then advanced alone, with that martial air and equestrian grace for which the tribe is noted. When within an arrow's flight of the thicket, he loosened his rein, urged his horse to full speed, threw his body on the opposite side, so as to hang by but one leg, and present no mark to the foe; in this way he swept along in front of the thicket, launching his arrows from under the neck of his steed. Then regaining his seat in the saddle, he wheeled round, and returned whooping and scoffing to his companions, who received him with yells of applause.

Another and another horseman repeated this exploit; but the Blackfeet were not to be taunted out of their safe shelter. The victors feared to drive desperate men to extremities, so they forebore to attempt the thicket. Towards night they gave over the attack, and returned all-glorious with the scalps of the slain. Then came on the usual feasts and triumphs; the scalp-dance of warriors round the ghastly trophies, and all the other fierce revelry of barbarous warfare. When the braves had finished with the scalps, they were, as usual, given up to the women and children, and made the objects of new parades and dances. They were then treasured up as invaluable trophies and decorations by the braves who had won them.

It is worthy of note, that the scalp of a white man, either through policy or fear, is treated with more charity than that of an Indian. The warrior who won it is entitled to his triumph if he demands it. In such case, the war party alone dance round the scalp. It is then taken down, and the

shagged frontlet of a buffalo substituted in its place, and abandoned to the triumphs and insults of the million.

To avoid being involved in these guerillas, as well as to escape from the extremely social intercourse of the Crows, which began to be oppressive, Montero moved to the distance of several miles from their camps, and there formed a winter cantonment of huts. He now maintained a vigilant watch at night. Their horses, which were turned loose to graze during the day, under heedful eyes, were brought in at night, and shut up in strong pens, built of large logs of cotton-wood.

The snows, during a portion of the winter, were so deep that the poor animals could find but little sustenance. Here and there a tuft of grass would peer above the snow; but they were in general driven to browse the twigs and tender branches of the trees. When they were turned out in the morning, the first moments of freedom from the confinement of the pen were spent in frisking and gambolling. This done, they went soberly and sadly to work, to glean their scanty subsistence for the day. In the meantime, the men stripped the bark of the cotton-wood tree for the evening fodder. As the poor horses would return towards night, with sluggish and dispirited air, the moment they saw their owners approaching them with blankets filled with cotton-wood bark, their whole demeanour underwent a change. A universal neighing and capering took place; they would rush forward, smell to the blankets, paw the earth, snort, whinny, and prance round with head and tail erect, until the blankets were opened, and the welcome provender spread before them. These evidences of intelligence and gladness were frequently recounted by the trappers as proving the sagacity of the animal.

These veteran rovers of the mountains look upon their horses as in some respects gifted with almost human intellect. An old and experienced trapper, when mounting guard about the camp in dark nights and times of peril, gives heedful attention to all the sounds and signs of the horses. No enemy enters nor approaches the camp without attracting their notice, and their movements not only give a vague alarm, but it is said will even indicate to the knowing trapper the very quarter whence danger threatens.

In the daytime, too, while a hunter is engaged on the prairie, cutting up the deer or buffalo he has slain, he depends upon his faithful horse as a sentinel. The sagacious animal

sees and smells all round him, and by his starting and whinnying, gives notice of the approach of strangers. There seems to be a dumb communion and fellowship, a sort of fraternal sympathy, between the hunter and his horse. They mutually rely upon each other for company and protection; and nothing is more difficult, it is said, than to surprise an experienced hunter on the prairie, while his old and favourite steed is at his side.

Montero had not long removed his camp from the vicinity of the Crows, and fixed himself in his new quarters, when the Blackfeet marauders discovered his cantonment, and began to haunt the vicinity. He kept up a vigilant watch, however, and foiled every attempt of the enemy, who, at length, seemed to have given up in despair, and abandoned the neighbourhood. The trappers relaxed their vigilance, therefore, and one night, after a day of severe labour, no guards were posted, and the whole camp was soon asleep. Towards midnight, however, the lightest sleepers were aroused by the trampling of hoofs; and, giving the alarm, the whole party were immediately on their legs, and hastened to the pens. The bars were down; but no enemy was to be seen or heard, and the horses being all found hard by, it was supposed they had been left down through negligence. All were once more asleep, when, in about an hour, there was a second alarm, and it was discovered that several horses were missing. The rest were mounted, and so spirited a pursuit took place, that eighteen of the number carried off were regained, and but three remained in possession of the enemy. Traps, for wolves, had been set about the camp the preceding day. In the morning, it was discovered that a Blackfoot was entrapped by one of them, but had succeeded in dragging it off. His trail was followed for a long distance, which he must have limped alone. At length, he appeared to have fallen in with some of his comrades, who had relieved him from his painful incumbrance.

These were the leading incidents of Montero's campaign in the Crow country. The united parties now celebrated the 4th of July, in rough hunters' style, with hearty conviviality; after which, Captain Bonneville made his final arrangements. Leaving Montero with a brigade of trappers to open another campaign, he put himself at the head of the residue of his men, and set off on his return to civilized life. We shall not

detail his journey along the course of the Nebraska, and so, from point to point of the wilderness, until he and his band reached the frontier settlements on the 22nd of August.

Here, according to his own account, his cavalcade might have been taken for a procession of tatterdemalion savages; for the men were ragged almost to nakedness, and had contracted a wildness of aspect during three years of wandering in the wilderness. A few hours in a populous town, however, produced a magical metamorphosis. Hats of the most ample brim and longest nap, coats with buttons that shone like mirrors, and pantaloons of the most ample plenitude, took place of the well-worn trapper's equipments; and the happy wearers might be seen strolling about in all directions, scattering their silver like sailors just from a cruise.

The worthy captain, however, seems by no means to have shared the excitement of his men on finding himself once more in the thronged resorts of civilized life, but, on the contrary, to have looked back to the wilderness with regret. "Though the prospect," says he, "of once more tasting the blessings of peaceful society, and passing days and nights under the calm guardianship of the laws, was not without its attractions; yet to those of us whose whole lives had been spent in the stirring excitement and perpetual watchfulness of adventures in the wilderness, the change was far from promising an increase of that contentment and inward satisfaction most conducive to happiness. He who, like myself, has roved almost from boyhood among the children of the forest, and over the unfurrowed plains and rugged heights of the western wastes, will not be startled to learn, that notwithstanding all the fascinations of the world on this civilized side of the mountains, I would fain make my bow to the splendours and gaieties of the metropolis, and plunge again amidst the hardships and perils of the wilderness."

We have only to add, that the affairs of the captain have been satisfactorily arranged with the War Department, and that he is actually in service at Fort Gibson, on our western frontier, where we hope he may meet with further opportunities of indulging his peculiar tastes, and of collecting graphic and characteristic details of the great western wilds and their motley inhabitants.

We here close our picturings of the Rocky Mountains and their wild inhabitants, and of the wild life that prevails there; which we have been anxious to fix on record, because we are aware that this singular state of things is full of mutation, and must soon undergo great changes, if not entirely pass away. The fur trade itself, which has given life to all this portraiture, is essentially evanescent. Rival parties of trappers soon exhaust the streams, especially when competition renders them heedless and wasteful of the beaver. The fur-bearing animals extinct, a complete change will come over the scene: the gay free trapper and his steed, decked out in wild array, and tinkling with bells and trinketry; the savage war chief, plumed and painted, and ever on the prowl; the traders' cavalcade, winding through defiles or over naked plains, with the stealthy war party lurking on its trail; the buffalo chase, the hunting camp, the mad carousal in the midst of danger, the night attack, the stampado, the scamper, the fierce skirmish among rocks and cliffs—all this romance of savage life, which yet exists among the mountains, will then exist but in frontier story, and seem like the fictions of chivalry or fairy tale.

Some new system of things, or rather some new modification, will succeed among the roving people of this vast wilderness; but just as opposite, perhaps, to the habitudes of civilization. The great Chippewyan chain of mountains, and the sandy and volcanic plains which extend on either side, are represented as incapable of cultivation. The pasturage which prevails there during a certain portion of the year, soon withers under the aridity of the atmosphere, and leaves nothing but dreary wastes. An immense belt of rocky mountains and volcanic plains, several hundred miles in width, must ever remain an irreclaimable wilderness, intervening between the abodes of civilization, and affording a last refuge to the Indian. Here roving tribes of hunters, living in tents or lodges, and following the migrations of the game, may lead a life of savage independence, where there is nothing to tempt the cupidity of the white man. The amalgamation of various tribes, and of white men of every nation, will in time produce hybrid races, like the mountain Tartars of the Caucasus. Possessed as they are of immense droves of horses, should they continue their present predatory and warlike habits, they may, in time, become a scourge to the civilized

frontiers on either side of the mountains, as they are at present a terror to the traveller and trader.

The facts disclosed in the present work clearly manifest the policy of establishing military posts and a mounted force to protect our traders in their journeys across the great western wilds, and of pushing the outposts into the very heart of the singular wilderness we have laid open, so as to maintain some degree of sway over the country, and to put an end to the kind of "black mail," levied on all occasions by the savage "chivalry of the mountains."

APPENDIX.

NATHANIEL J. WYETH, AND THE TRADE OF THE FAR WEST.

WE have brought Captain Bonneville to the end of his western campaigning, yet we cannot close this work without subjoining some particulars concerning the fortunes of his contemporary, Mr. Wyeth, anecdotes of whose enterprise have occasionally been interwoven in the party-coloured web of our narrative. Wyeth effected his intention of establishing a trading post on the Portneuf, which he named Fort Hall. Here, for the first time, the American flag was unfurled to the breeze that sweeps the great naked wastes of the central wilderness. Leaving twelve men here with a stock of goods, to trade with the neighbouring tribes, he prosecuted his journey to the Columbia, where he established another post, called Fort Williams, on Wappatoo Island, at the mouth of the Wallamut. This was to be the head factory of his company; whence they were to carry on their fishing and trapping operations, and their trade with the interior, and where they were to receive and dispatch their annual ship.

The plan of Mr. Wyeth appears to have been well concerted. He had observed that the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, the bands of free trappers, as well as the Indians west of the mountains, depended for their supplies upon goods brought from St. Louis, which, in consequence of the expenses and risks of a long land carriage, were furnished them at an immense advance on first cost. He had an idea that they might be much more cheaply supplied from the Pacific side. Horses would cost much less on the borders of the Columbia than at St. Louis; the transportation by land was much shorter, and through a country much more safe from the hostility of savage tribes, which, on the route from and to St. Louis, annually cost the lives of many men. On this idea he grounded his plan. He combined the salmon fishery with the fur trade. A fortified trading post was to be established on the Columbia, to carry on a trade with the natives for salmon and peltries, and to fish and trap on their own account. Once a year a ship was to come from the United States, to bring out goods for the interior trade, and to take home the salmon and furs which had been collected. Part of the goods thus brought out were to be dispatched to the mountains, to supply the trap-

ping companies and the Indian tribes, in exchange for their furs, which were to be brought down to the Columbia, to be sent home in the next annual ship, and thus an annual round was to be kept up. The profits on the salmon, it was expected, would cover all the expenses of the ship, so that the goods brought out, and the furs carried home, would cost nothing as to freight.

His enterprise was prosecuted with a spirit, intelligence, and perseverance that merited success. All the details that we have met with, prove him to be no ordinary man. He appears to have the mind to conceive and the energy to execute extensive and striking plans. He had once more reared the American flag in the lost domains of Astoria, and had he been enabled to maintain the footing he had so gallantly effected, he might have regained for his country the opulent trade of the Columbia, of which our statesmen have negligently suffered us to be dispossessed.

It is needless to go into a detail of the variety of accidents and cross-purposes which caused the failure of his scheme. They were such as all undertakings of the kind, involving combined operations by sea and land, are liable to. What he most wanted was sufficient capital to enable him to endure incipient obstacles and losses, and to hold on until success had time to spring up from the midst of disastrous experiments.

It is with extreme regret we learn that he has recently been compelled to dispose of his establishment at Wappatoo Island to the Hudson's Bay Company; who, it is but justice to say, have, according to his own account, treated him throughout the whole of his enterprise with great fairness, friendship, and liberality. That company, therefore, still maintains an unrivalled sway over the whole country washed by the Columbia and its tributaries. It has, in fact, as far as its chartered powers permit, followed out the splendid scheme contemplated by Mr. Astor, when he founded his establishment at the mouth of the Columbia. From their emporium of Vancouver companies are sent forth in every direction to supply the interior posts, to trade with the natives, and to trap upon the various streams. These thread the rivers, traverse the plains, penetrate to the heart of the mountains, extend their enterprises northward to the Russian possessions, and southward to the confines of California. Their yearly supplies are received by sea, at Vancouver, and thence their furs and peltries are shipped to London. They likewise maintain a considerable commerce in wheat and lumber with the Pacific islands, and to the north, with the Russian settlements.

Though the company, by treaty, have a right to a participation only in the trade of these regions, and are, in fact, but tenants on sufferance, yet have they quietly availed themselves of the original oversight and subsequent supineness of the American government to establish a monopoly of the trade of the river and its dependencies, and are adroitly proceeding to fortify themselves in their usurpation by securing all the strong points of the country.

Fort George, originally Astoria, which was abandoned on the removal of the main factory to Vancouver, was renewed in 1830, and is now kept up as a fortified post and trading house. All the places accessible to shipping have been taken possession of, and posts recently established at them by the company.

The great capital of this association, their long established system, their hereditary influence over the Indian tribes, their internal organization, which makes everything go on with the regularity of a machine, and the

low wages of their people, who are mostly Canadians, give them great advantages over the American traders; nor is it likely the latter will ever be able to maintain any footing in the land until the question of territorial right is adjusted between the two countries. The sooner that takes place the better. It is a question too serious to national pride, if not to national interest, to be slurred over, and every year is adding to the difficulties which environ it.

The fur trade, which is now the main object of enterprise west of the Rocky Mountains, forms but a part of the real resources of the country. Beside the salmon fishery of the Columbia, which is capable of being rendered a considerable source of profit, the great valleys of the lower country, below the elevated volcanic plateau, are calculated to give sustenance to countless flocks and herds, and to sustain a great population of graziers and agriculturists.

Such, for instance, is the beautiful valley of the Wallamut, from which the establishment at Vancouver draws most of its supplies. Here the company holds mills and farms, and has provided for some of its superannuated officers and servants. This valley, above the falls, is about fifty miles wide, and extends a great distance to the south. The climate is mild, being sheltered by lateral ranges of mountains; while the soil for richness has been equalled to the best of the Missouri lands. The valley of the river Des Chutes is also admirably calculated for a great grazing country. All the best horses used by the company for the mountains are raised there. The valley is of such happy temperature that grass grows there throughout the year, and cattle may be left out to pasture during the winter. These valleys must form the grand points of commencement of the future settlement of the country; but there must be many such enfolded in the embraces of these lower ranges of mountains, which, though at present they lie waste and uninhabited, and to the eye of the trader and trapper present but barren wastes, would, in the hands of skilful agriculturists and husbandmen, soon assume a different aspect, and teem with waving crops, or be covered with flocks and herds.

The resources of the country, too, while in the hands of a company restricted in its trade, can be but partially called forth; but in the hands of Americans, enjoying a direct trade with the East Indies, would be brought into quickening activity, and might soon realize the dream of Mr. Astor, in giving rise to a flourishing commercial empire.

WRECK OF A JAPANESE JUNK ON THE NORTH-WEST COAST.

The following extract of a letter, which we received lately from Mr. Wyeth, may be interesting, as throwing some light upon the question as to the manner in which America has been peopled:—

“Are you aware of the fact, that in the winter of 1833, a Japanese junk was wrecked on the north-west coast, in the neighbourhood of Queen Charlotte's Island, and that all but two of the crew, then much reduced by starvation and disease, during a long drift across the Pacific, were killed by the natives? The two fell into the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company, and were sent to England. I saw them on my arrival at Vancouver, in 1834.”

INSTRUCTIONS TO CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE FROM THE MAJOR-GENERAL COMMANDING THE ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES.

*Head Quarters of the Army,
Washington, August 3, 1831.*

SIR,—The leave of absence which you have asked for the purpose of enabling you to carry into execution your design of exploring the country to the Rocky Mountains and beyond, with a view of ascertaining the nature and character of the several tribes of Indians inhabiting those regions, the trade which might be profitably carried on with them, the quality of the soil, the productions, the minerals, the natural history, the climate, the geography and topography, as well as geology, of the various parts of the country within the limits of the territories belonging to the United States, between our frontier and the Pacific, has been duly considered and submitted to the War Department for approval, and has been sanctioned. You are, therefore, authorized to be absent from the army until October, 1833. It is understood that the government is to be at no expense in reference to your proposed expedition, it having originated with yourself; and all that you required was the permission from the proper authority to undertake the enterprise. You will naturally, in preparing yourself for the expedition, provide suitable instruments, and especially the best maps of the interior to be found.

It is desirable, besides what is enumerated as the object of your enterprise, that you note particularly the number of warriors that may be in each tribe or nation that you may meet with, their alliances with other tribes, and their relative position as to a state of peace or war, and whether their friendly or warlike dispositions towards each other are recent or of long standing. You will gratify us by describing their manner of making war; of the mode of subsisting themselves during a state of war and a state of peace; their arms and the effect of them; whether they act on foot or on horseback; detailing the discipline and manœuvres of the war parties; the power of their horses, size, and general description; in short, every information which you may conceive would be useful to the government.

You will avail yourself of every opportunity of informing us of your position and progress, and at the expiration of your leave of absence, will join your proper station.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

ALEXANDER MACOMB,

Major-General, Commanding the Army.

Capt. B. L. E. BONNEVILLE,
7th Regt. of Infantry, New York.

THE
CONQUEST OF FLORIDA,

UNDER
HERNANDO DE SOTO.

BY THEODORE IRVING.

“ Son quattromila, e bene armati e bene
Instrutti, usi al disagio e tolleranti.
Buona è la gente, e non può da più dotta
O da più forte guida esser condotta.”—*Tasso*.

LONDON:
HENRY G. BOHN, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1850.

DEDICATION.

TO WASHINGTON IRVING, ESQ.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

I KNOW of no person to whom I can with more propriety dedicate the following pages than to yourself, since they were written at your suggestion and the materials of which they are composed were moulded into their present form and feature under your affectionate and judicious advice.

Often, in the course of my labours, when I have been dismayed by unlooked-for difficulties, and disheartened by those misgivings which beset an inexperienced writer, you have dispelled my doubts, cheered my faltering spirit, and encouraged me to persevere.

I would be pardoned for alluding to other and greater obligations yet nearer to my heart. With the anxious interest of a parent, you have watched over the most critical period of my life. Amid the excitement and snares of foreign scenes, and in the quiet employments of our home, your counsel has been my guide—your friendship—the circumstances will excuse the term from one so much your junior—your friendship my happiness and pride. The heedlessness of boyhood could not arrest your assiduous care—the wayward habits of youth have not wearied your unceasing solicitude. That I have been thus far led in safety, claims the fervent gratitude of

Your affectionate nephew,

THEODORE IRVING.

New York, March, 1835.

PREFACE.

WHILE studying the Spanish language, some few years since, at Madrid, an old chronicle was placed in my hands, relating to the early discoveries and achievements of the Spaniards in America. It was denominated "The Florida of the Inca, or the History of the Adelantado, Hernando de Soto, Governor and Captain-General of the Kingdom of Florida, and of other heroic cavaliers, Spaniards and Indians: written by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega." As I read, I became insensibly engrossed by the extraordinary enterprise therein narrated. I dwelt with intense interest upon the hair-brained adventures and daring exploits of steel-clad warriors, and the no less valiant and chivalrous deeds of savage chieftains, which entitle this narrative to the high praise bestowed upon it by Mr. Southey, of being one of the most delightful works in the Spanish language.

At a subsequent period, I was advised to undertake a free translation of it into English, as a literary exercise. While occupied in this task, I had the good fortune to meet with a narrative on the same subject, written by a Portuguese soldier, who was present in the expedition. This led me to further research and closer examination; and, finding that the striking events and perilous adventures in the chronicle of the Inca, were borne out, in the main, by this narrative from another hand, and that various lights had been thrown by modern travellers upon the line of march, said to have been pursued by the adventurous band of De Soto, I was convinced, that what I had before regarded almost as a work of fiction, was an authentic, though, perhaps, occasionally exaggerated history.

Deeming, therefore, that a full account of an expedition which throws such an air of romance over the early history of a portion of our country, would possess interest in the eyes of my countrymen, I resolved, to the best of my abilities, to digest a work from the materials before me.

The two main sources from which I have derived my facts, are the narratives already mentioned, by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and by the anonymous Portuguese adventurer. The former I have consulted in a folio edition, printed at Madrid, in 1723, and in the history of the Indias, by Herrera, in which it is incorporated almost at full length. The Portuguese narrative I have found in an English translation, published in London, in 1686, and in an abridgment in Purchas' Pilgrims.

It has been the fashion, in latter days, to distrust the narrative of the Inca, and to put more faith in that of the Portuguese. This has occasionally been done without due examination into their respective claims to credibility. Garcilaso de la Vega was a man of rank and honour. He was descended from an ancient Spanish stock by the father's side, while by the mother's, he was of the lofty Peruvian line of the Incas. His narrative was originally taken by himself, from the lips of a friend; a cavalier of worth and respectability, who had been an officer under De Soto, and for whose

probity we have the word of the Inca as a guarantee. It was authenticated and enriched by the written journals, or memorandums, of two other soldiers, who had served in the expedition. He had the testimony, therefore, of three eye-witnesses.

The Portuguese narrative, on the other hand, is the evidence of merely a single eye-witness, who represents himself as a cavalier, or gentleman; but for this we have merely his own word, and he is anonymous. There is nothing intrinsic in his work that should entitle it to the exclusive belief which has been claimed for it. It agrees with the narrative of the Inca, as to the leading facts which form the frame-work of the story: it differs from it occasionally, as to the plans and views of Hernando de Soto; but here the Inca is most to be depended upon—the Spanish cavalier from whom he derived his principal information, being more likely to be admitted to the intimate councils of his commander than one of a different nation, besides being free from the tinge of national jealousy, which may have influenced the statements of the Portuguese.

The narrative of the Portuguese is more meagre and concise than that of Garcilaso; omitting a thousand interesting anecdotes and personal adventures; but this does not increase its credibility. A multitude of facts, gathered from three different persons, may easily have escaped the knowledge, or have failed to excite the attention of a solitary individual. These anecdotes are not the less credible because they were striking and extraordinary. The whole expedition was daring and extravagant, and those concerned in it were men who delighted in adventure and exploit.*

I have been induced, therefore, in the following pages, to draw my facts more freely and copiously than others, in latter days, have seemed inclined to do, from the work of the Inca; still I have scrupulously and diligently collated the two narratives, endeavouring to reconcile them where they disagreed, to ascertain, with strict impartiality, which was most likely to be correct, where they materially varied, and to throw upon the whole subject the scattered lights furnished by various modern investigators. While I have discarded many incidents which appeared hyperbolical, or savoured too strongly of the gossip of an idle soldiery, I have retained, as much as possible, those everyday and familiar anecdotes which give so lively a picture of the characters, habits, persons, and manners of the Spanish discoverers of those days, and to my mind, bear so strongly the impress of truth and of nature. My great object has been to present a clear, connected, and characteristic narrative of this singular expedition: how far I have succeeded it is for the public to judge.

* The reader will find a note concerning Garcilaso de la Vega and his work in the Appendix.

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CONQUEST OF FLORIDA.

CHAPTER I.

NEVER was the spirit of wild adventure more universally diffused than at the dawn of the sixteenth century. The wonderful discoveries made by Columbus and his hardy companions, the descriptions of the beautiful summer isles of the west, and the tales of unexplored regions of wealth locked up in unbounded wildernesses, had an effect upon the imaginations of the young and the adventurous, not unlike the preaching of the chivalric crusades for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. The gallant knight, the servile retainer, the soldier of fortune, the hooded friar, the pains-taking mechanic, the industrious husbandman, the loose profligate, and the hardy mariner,—all were touched with the pervading passion; all left their home, country, friends, wives, children, loves, to seek some imaginary Eldorado, confidently expecting to return with countless treasure.

Of the enterprises undertaken in this spirit, none has surpassed, in hardihood and variety of incident, that of the renowned Hernando de Soto and his band of cavaliers. It was poetry put into action; it was the knight-errantry of the old world carried into the depths of the American wilderness. Indeed, the personal adventures, the feats of individual prowess, the picturesque descriptions of steel-clad cavaliers, with lance and helm and prancing steed, glittering through the wilds of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and the prairies of the Far West, would seem the mere fictions of romance, did they not come to us recorded in matter-of-fact narratives of contemporaries, and corroborated by the minute and daily memoranda of eye-witnesses.

Before we enter, however, upon the stirring and eventful narrative of the fortunes of De Soto and his followers, it is proper to notice briefly the discovery of the land which was the scene of his adventures, and the various expeditions which stimulated him to his great enterprise.

Those who are conversant with the history of Spanish dis-

coveries, will remember the chimerical cruise of the brave old Governor of Porto Rico, Ponce de Leon, in search of the Fountain of Youth. This fabled fountain, according to Indian tradition, existed in one of the Bahama Islands. Ponce de Leon sought it in vain; but in the course of his cruising discovered a country of unknown extent, to which, from the abundance of its flowers, and from its being first seen on Palm Sunday, (Pascha Florida,) he gave the name of Florida.

Obtaining permission from the Spanish government to subjugate and govern this country, he made a second voyage to its shores, but was mortally wounded in a conflict with the natives. Such was the fate of the first adventurer into the regions of Florida, and he seems to have bequeathed his ill fortune to his successors.

A few years after his defeat, a captain of a caravel, named Diego Miruelo, was driven to the coast of Florida by stress of weather, where he obtained a small quantity of silver and gold in traffic from the natives. With this he returned well pleased to San Domingo, spreading the fame of the country he had visited. About the same time a company of several wealthy men at San Domingo, concerned in gold mines, at the head of which was the Licentiate Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, auditor and judge of appeals in that island, fitted out two vessels to cruise among the islands and entrap Indians to work in the mines. In the course of this cruise the vessels were driven by stress of weather to a cape on the eastern coast, to which their crews gave the name of St. Helena. The country in the neighbourhood was called Chicorea, and is the same now called South Carolina. They anchored at the mouth of a river which they called the Jordan, after the name of the captain who discovered it. It is the same now known by the Indian appellation of Cambahee.* The natives hastened to the shores at sight of the ships, which they mistook for huge sea monsters; but, when they beheld men issue from them, with white complexions and

* We follow the general opinion, strengthened by the circumstance that the neighbouring sound and island are still called St. Helena. Herrera places Cape St. Helena and the river Jordan in the thirty-second degree of latitude, which is that of the Savannah river.—*Vide Herrera. D. 2. lib. X. c. 6.*

beards, clad in raiment and shining armour, [they fled in terror.

The Spaniards having dispelled their fears, a friendly intercourse took place. The Indians were kind and hospitable, brought provisions to the ships and made the strangers presents of martin skins, pearls, together with a small quantity of gold and silver. The Spaniards gave them trinkets in return, and, having completed their supplies of wood, water and provisions, invited their savage friends on board their ships. These latter eagerly accepted the invitation. They thronged the vessels, gazing with wonder at every thing around them; but when a sufficient number were below the decks, the Spaniards perfidiously closed the hatches upon them, and, weighing anchor, made sail for San Domingo. One of the ships was lost in the course of the voyage; the other arrived safe, but the Indians on board remaining sullen and gloomy, and refusing food, most of them perished.*

The reports, however, brought back by the kidnappers, of the country they had visited, and the specimens of gold and silver brought home about the same time by Diego Miruelo, roused the cupidity of the auditor Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon. Being shortly afterwards in Spain, he obtained from the Emperor Charles V, permission to conquer and govern the newly discovered province of Chicorea. With this permission he returned to San Domingo, and fitted out an armament of three large vessels, embarking personally in the enterprise.

Diego Miruelo persuaded him first to steer in quest of the country which the former had already visited, and which he represented as much richer than Chicorea. Miruelo accompanied the expedition as pilot, but, with a want of foresight altogether unworthy of a practised mariner, having neglected in his first visit to take an observation, he was unable to find the place at which he had formerly landed, and was so much mortified by the ridicule and reproaches of his employers, that he fell into a profound melancholy, lost his senses, and died in the course of a few days.

Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon now prosecuted his voyage to the eastward in search of Chicorea. Arriving in the river Jordan, (or Cambahee)—the scene of perfidy acted during

* Hist. Florida por el Inca. L. 1. c. 2. Herrera. D. 2. L. x. c. 6.

the preceding voyage—his principal ship stranded and was lost. With the remaining two he passed further to the eastward, and landed on the coast adjoining Chicorea, in a gentle and pleasant region. Here he was so well received that he considered the country already under his dominion, and permitted two hundred of his men to visit the principal village, about three leagues in the interior, while he remained with a small force to protect the ships.

The inhabitants of the village entertained these visitors with feasting for three days, until having put them completely off their guard, they rose upon them in the night and massacred every soul. They then repaired by daybreak to the harbour, and surprised Vasquez de Ayllon and his handful of guards. The few who survived escaped wounded and dismayed to their ships, and making all sail from the fatal shore, hastened back to San Domingo. According to some accounts, Ayllon remained among the slain on the coast he sought to subjugate, but others assert that he returned wounded to San Domingo, where the humiliation of his defeat and the ruin of his fortune, conspired with his bodily sufferings to hurry him broken-hearted to the grave. Thus signally did the natives of Chicorea revenge the wrongs of their people who had been so perfidiously kidnapped.*

CHAPTER II.

THE next person who aspired to subjugate the unknown realms of Florida, was a cavalier of greater note, the brave but ill-starred Pamphilo de Narvaez, who had endeavoured to arrest Hernando Cortes in his victorious career against Mexico, in which attempt, Narvaez was defeated, and lost an eye. Possessing favour at court, he was enabled to fit out a considerable armament for his new enterprise. He was invested by the Emperor Charles V. with the title of Adelantado, or military governor of the country he expected to occupy, which was that part of Florida extending from its extreme cape to the river of Palms. In this expedition he

* Hist. Florida, por el Inca. L. 1. c. 2. Herrera. D. 2. L. x. c. 6. Idem. D. iii. lib. 8. c. 8. Peter Martyr. D. vii. c. 11. Heylyn's Cosmographie. L. 4. p. 100. Lond. Ed. 1669.

trusted to wipe off the disgrace of his late defeat, and even to acquire a reputation which might vie with that of Cortes.

On the 12th of April, 1528, Narvaez anchored at the mouth of an open bay on the eastern coast of Florida, with a squadron of four barques and a brigantine. Here he landed his forces, consisting of four hundred men, and forty-five horses; having lost many of the former by desertion in the West India islands, and several of the latter in a storm.

Erecting the royal standard, he took possession of the country for the crown of Spain, without opposition from the natives. After having explored the vicinity, Narvaez determined to penetrate the country in a northerly direction, hoping to discover some great empire like that of Mexico or Peru. Meanwhile the ships were to proceed along the coast in quest of some convenient harbour where, if they discovered such, he ordered that they should either await his arrival, or steer for Havana, and return with supplies for the army.*

This plan was strongly opposed by the treasurer of the expedition, one Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, a prudent and sagacious man. He represented the danger of plunging into an unknown wilderness without knowing a word of the language, and advised, rather, that they should continue in their ships, until they found a secure harbour and a fertile country, whence they might make incursions into the interior.

This advice was slighted by Narvaez and his adventurous companions, whose imaginations were inflamed with the idea of inland conquest. The squadron accordingly sailed to the northward; Narvaez and his troops setting out by land in the same direction, accompanied by the faithful Alvar Nuñez, who, since he could not dissuade his commander from his desperate course, resolved to share his fate.

The force which proceeded by land consisted of three hundred men, forty of whom were mounted on horses. The allowance to each man consisted of two pounds of biscuit and half a pound of bacon. For the first few days they met with fields of maize, and villages containing provisions. Here, however, they outraged the feelings of the natives by rifling their sepulchres, mistaking them for idolatrous temples. They afterwards journeyed many days through desert solitudes, where there was neither house nor inhabi-

* Herrera, Decad. iv. L. iv. c. 4.

tant, suffering greatly from want of food. They crossed rapid rivers on rafts or by swimming, continually exposed to the assaults of hordes of lurking savages. They traversed swamps and forests, making their way with great difficulty through thickets encumbered by fallen trees, and suffering every variety of hardship.

Still they were cheered onward by the assurances of certain captives who served as guides, that at some distance before them lay a vast province called Apalachee, extremely fertile, and abounding in the gold they so eagerly sought after.

At length they arrived in sight of the place which gave its name to this long-desired province. Narvaez had pictured to himself a second Mexico, and was chagrined at finding a mere village of two hundred and forty houses. Alvar Nuñez was sent forward to take possession, which he did without opposition, the inhabitants having all fled to the woods.

The Spaniards remained twenty-five days in the village, exploring the neighbouring country, and subsisting upon the provisions they found in the place. During this time they were harassed, day and night, by the natives, who proved to be an exceedingly warlike people, besides being disappointed in their hopes of finding gold, and discouraged by accounts of the country further on. They were told, however, that by shaping their course to the southward, towards the sea, after nine days' journey, they would come to the village of Aute, where maize, vegetables and fish would be found in abundance, and where the natives were of a friendly disposition.

Towards Aute, therefore, they turned their steps, more eager now for food than for gold. The journey was perilous and full of disaster. They had to cross deep lagoons, and dangerous swamps, the water often up to their breasts, their passage obstructed by rotten trees, and beset by hordes of savages. These latter appeared to the disheartened Spaniards of gigantic stature; they had bows of an enormous size, from which they discharged arrows with such force as to penetrate armour at the distance of two hundred yards. At length, after incredible hardships, and with the loss of many men and horses, the adventurers arrived at the village of Aute.* The natives abandoned and burnt their houses as the

* Supposed to be on what is now called the Bay of St. Marks.

invaders approached; but left behind a quantity of maize, with which the Spaniards appeased their hunger.

A day's march beyond the village brought them to a river which gradually expanded into a large estuary. Here they came to a pause in their perilous career, and held a consultation as to their future movements. Their hopes of wealth and conquest were at an end. Nearly a third of their original number had perished; while of the survivors a great majority were ill, and disease was daily spreading among them. To attempt to retrace their steps, or to proceed along the coast in search of the fleet would be to hazard the lives of all. At length it was suggested that they should construct small barks, launch them and keep along the coast until they should reach their ships. This was a forlorn hope, but they caught at it like desperate men. They accordingly set to work with great eagerness. One of them constructed a pair of bellows out of deer skins, to which he applied a wooden pipe. Others made charcoal, and a forge. By the aid of these, they soon turned their stirrups, spurs, cross-bows, and other articles of iron into nails, saws, and hatchets. The tails and manes of their horses twisted with the fibres of the palm-tree, served for rigging; the men's shirts cut open and sewed together furnished sails; the fibrous part of the palm was also used as oakum, the resin of the pine for tar; the skins of horses were made into vessels to contain fresh water; and a quantity of maize was won by hard fighting from the natives. A horse was killed every three days to furnish provisions for the labourers and for the sick. Having at length by great exertions completed five frail vessels, the Spaniards embarked on the 22nd of September, each vessel containing from forty to fifty persons, but so closely crowded, that there was scarcely room to move, whilst the gunwales of these fragile barks were forced down to the water's edge.

Setting sail from this bay, which they called the Bay of Caballos, and continuing their course for several days, they reached an island, where they secured five canoes that had been deserted by the Indians. These being attached to their vessels enabled them to sail with greater comfort. Passing through the strait between the island and the main land, which they called the Strait of San Miguel, they sailed onward for many days, enduring all the torments of hunger and

thirst. The skins which contained their fresh water having burst, some of the men, driven to desperation, drank salt water, and died miserably. Their sufferings too were aggravated by a fearful storm. At length they approached a more populous and fertile part of the coast, upon which they occasionally landed to procure provisions, and were immediately involved in fatal affrays with the natives. Thus harassed by sea and land, famishing with hunger, their barks scattered and scarcely manageable, these unfortunate wanderers lost all presence of mind, and became wild and desperate. They were again driven out to sea, and scattered during a stormy night. At daybreak three of these tempest-tossed vessels rejoined each other. In one, which was the best manned and the best sailer, was Pamphilo de Narvaez. Alvar Nuñez, who had command of another, seeing the Adelantado making towards the land, called upon him for aid. Narvaez replied that it was no longer time to assist others, but that every one must take care of himself. He then steered towards the shore, and left Alvar Nuñez to make the best of his way with the other bark.

After sailing along the coast for many days, one night Narvaez anchored off the land. All his crew had gone on shore for provisions, except one sailor and a page who was sick. A violent gale springing up from the north, the vessel, in which was neither food nor water, was driven out to sea, and no tidings were ever after heard of her. Thus perished the ill-fated Pamphilo de Narvaez.

The only survivors of this disastrous expedition were Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, and four of his companions. After the most singular and unparalleled hardships, they traversed the northern parts of Florida, crossed the Mississippi, the desert and mountainous regions on the confines of Texas and the Rocky Mountains, passing from tribe to tribe of Indians, oftentimes as slaves, until, at the expiration of several years, they succeeded in reaching the Spanish settlement of Compostella. From thence Alvar Nuñez proceeded to Mexico, and ultimately arrived at Lisbon in 1537; nearly ten years after his embarkation with Pamphilo de Narvaez.*

* This chapter is chiefly taken from the "Naufragios de Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca," with occasional references to Herrera.

CHAPTER III.

ONE would have thought that after the melancholy result of these sad enterprises, and others of less note, but equally unfortunate, the coast of Florida would have been avoided as a fated land. The Spanish discoverers, however, were not to be deterred by difficulties and dangers, and the accounts which they heard of the vast extent of this unknown country and of opulent regions in its interior, served only as a stimulus to still bolder and more extensive enterprises.

It is proper to note that the Spaniards, at this period, had a very vague idea of the country called Florida, and by no means limited it to its present boundaries. They knew something of the maritime border of the peninsula, but Florida, according to their notions, extended far beyond, embracing the confines of Mexico in one direction, the banks of Newfoundland in another, and expanding into a vast *Terra Incognita* to the north.

The accounts brought to Europe by Alvar Nuñez of the expedition of Pamphilo de Narvaez contributed to promote this idea. It was supposed that this unfortunate cavalier, in his extensive march, had but skirted the borders of immense internal empires, which might rival in opulence and barbaric splendour, the recently discovered kingdoms of Mexico and Peru ; and there was not wanting a bold and ambitious spirit to grasp immediately at the palm of conquest.

The candidate who now presented himself to undertake the subjugation of Florida was Hernando de Soto, and as his expedition is the subject of the following pages, it is proper that he should be introduced particularly to the reader. Hernando de Soto was born about the year 1501, in Villa Nueva de Barcarota,* and was of the old Spanish *hidalguia*, or gentry, for we are assured by one of his biographers that “he was a gentleman by all four descents,”—that is to say, the parents both of his father and mother were of gentle blood ; a pedigree, which, according to the rules of Spanish heraldry, entitled him to admission into the noble order of Santiago.

* The Portuguese narrator assigns Xeres de Badajos as the birth-place of De Soto ; we follow, however, the authority of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. Herrera. Hist. Ind. Dec. VI. L. 7. c. 9. agrees with the Inca

Whatever might be the dignity of his birth, however, he began his career a mere soldier of fortune. All his estate, says his Portuguese historian, was but a sword and buckler. He accompanied Pedrarias Davila,* when the latter went to America to assume the command of Terra Firma. The merits of De Soto soon gained him favour in the eye of Pedrarias, who gave him the command of a troop of horse: with these he followed Pizarro in his successful expedition into Peru. Here he quickly signalized himself by a rare combination of prudence and valour. He was excellent in council, yet foremost in every perilous exploit; not recklessly seeking danger for its own sake, or from a vain thirst of notoriety, but bravely putting every thing to the hazard where any important point was to be gained by intrepidity.

Pizarro soon singled him out from the hardy spirits around him, and appointed him his lieutenant.† If there was a service of especial danger to be performed, it was invariably entrusted to De Soto:—if there was an enterprise requiring sound judgment and fearless daring, De Soto was sure to be called upon. A master at all weapons, and a complete horseman, his prowess and dexterity were the admiration of the Spanish soldiery. They declared that his lance alone was equal to any ten in the army; and that in the management of this chivalrous weapon, he was second only to Pizarro.

He was sent by that commander on the first embassy to the renowned but ill-fated Inca Atahualpa, whose subjects, we are told, were filled with surprise and admiration on beholding his wonderful feats of horsemanship.‡

He afterwards commanded one of the squadrons of horse that captured this unfortunate Inca and routed his army of

* Properly written Pedro Arias de Avila.

† Herrera. Hist. Ind. Decad. V. L. ii. c. 2.

‡ Herrera. Hist. Ind. Decad. V. L. 3. c. 10. says, Hernando de Soto sprang upon his horse, and, aware that the eyes of the Inca were upon him, caused it to curvet, caracole and leap, and striking his spurs into its flanks, dashed up so near to the savage Prince, that he felt the very breath of the snorting animal. The haughty Inca was as serene and unmoved as if he had been accustomed all his life to the charge of a horse. Many of the Indians, however, fled in terror. Atahualpa immediately ordered the fugitives to appear before him, and sternly upbraiding them with their cowardice, ordered them all to be put to death for having behaved so dastardly in the royal presence.

warriors.* He led the way with a band of seventy horsemen, to the discovery and subjugation of the great province of Cusco, in which he distinguished himself by the most daring and romantic achievements.† We might trace him throughout the whole history of the Peruvian conquest by a series of perilous encounters and marvellous escapes, but our purpose is only to state briefly the circumstances which directed his ambition into the career of conquest, and elevated him to the notice of his sovereign, and of all contemporary cavaliers of enterprising spirit.

Hernando de Soto returned to Spain with the spoils of the new world; his share of the treasures of Atahualpa having amounted, it is said, to the enormous sum of a hundred and eighty thousand crowns of gold. He now assumed great state, and appeared at Valladolid, at the court of the Emperor Charles V., with extraordinary magnificence, having his steward, his major-domo, his master of horse, his pages, lacqueys, and all other household officers who in those ostentatious days, swelled the retinue of a Spanish nobleman. He was accompanied by a knot of brave cavaliers, all evidently bent on pushing their fortunes at court. Some of them had been his brothers in arms during the conquest of Peru, and had returned with their purses filled with Peruvian gold, which they expended in a style of military liberality upon horses, arms, and "rich array." Two or three of them deserve particular notice, as they will be found to figure conspicuously in the course of this narrative.

Nuño Tobar, a native of Xeres de Badajos, was a young cavalier of gallant bearing, of great valour and romantic generosity. Another, Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado, likewise of Xeres, had signalized himself during his campaigns in the new world. A third, Juan de Añasco, was a native of Seville. He had not been in Peru, but while equal to the others in bravery, he was likewise noted for nautical skill and a profound knowledge of cosmography and astronomy.

The world was at that time resounding with the recent conquest of Peru. The appearance at court of one of the conquerors, thus brilliantly attended, could not fail to attract attention. The personal qualifications of De Soto cor-

* Vega. Com. de Peru, L. 1. c. 21. Herrera, D. V. L. 2. c. 11.

† Herrera, Dec. V. L. 4. c. x. and lib. 5. c. 2, 3.

responded with his fame. He was in the prime of manhood, being about thirty-six years old, of a commanding stature, above the middle size, with a dark, animated, and expressive countenance. With such advantages of person and reputation, he soon succeeded in gaining the affections and the hand of a lady of distinguished rank, Isabella de Bobadilla, daughter to Pedrarias Davila, Count of Puño en Rostro. This marriage, connecting him with a powerful family, had a great effect in strengthening his influence at court.*

De Soto might now have purchased estates, and passed the remainder of his days opulently and honourably in his native land, in the bosom of his connexions, but he was excited by the remembrance of past adventures, and eager for further distinction. Just at this juncture, Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain with tidings of the fate of Pamphilo de Narvaez and his followers. His tale, it is true, was one of hardships and disasters, but it turned the thoughts of adventurous men to the vast and unexplored interior of Florida. It is said that Alvar Nuñez, when questioned as to whether there was any gold in the country he had visited, observed much reserve and mystery in his replies;—that he talked of asking permission of the crown to return there and prosecute further discoveries, and that he had even sworn his fellow survivors to secrecy upon all points connected with their discoveries, lest others should be induced to interfere with his prospects.†

The imagination of De Soto took fire at the narrative of Alvar Nuñez. He doubted not that there existed in the interior of Florida regions of wealth, equalling, if not exceeding Mexico and Peru. He had hitherto only followed in the course of conquest; an opportunity now presented itself of rivalling the fame of Cortes and Pizarro; his reputation, his wealth, his past services, and his matrimonial connexions—all gave him the means of trying the chances before him. With the magnificent spirit of a Spanish cavalier, he asked permission of the Emperor to undertake the conquest of Florida at his own expense.

His prayer was readily granted. The Emperor conferred on him the title of Adelantado, which combines military and civil command, and a Marquisite, with an estate thirty

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 1. † Portuguese Narrative, c. 2.

leagues in length and fifteen in breadth, in any part the country he might discover. He, moreover, created him for life, Governor and Captain-General of Florida, as well as of the island of Cuba. The command of this island had been annexed at the especial request of De Soto, as he knew it would be important for him to have complete control over it, in order that he might thus be enabled to fit out and supply his armaments for the meditated conquest.

No sooner were the wishes of De Soto gratified, than he provided for his companions in arms who had accompanied him to court. He appointed Nuño de Tobar his Lieutenant-General, for which post the latter was well qualified by his great valour and popular qualities. He made Luis de Moscaso de Alvarado, Camp Master General, and procured for Juan de Anasco the appointment of Contador, or royal accountant. It was the duty of this officer to take account of all the treasures gained in the expedition, and to set apart one fifth for the crown.

De Soto would likewise have engaged Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca to accompany him, and offered him highly advantageous terms, which De Vaca was at first inclined to accept, but subsequently refused, being unwilling to march under the command of another in an enterprise in which he had aspired to take the lead. He afterwards obtained from the Emperor the government of Rio de la Plata.*

But although Alvar Nuñez declined to embark in the enterprise, his representations of the country induced two of his kinsmen to offer their services. One of them, a brave and hardy cavalier, named Balthazar de Gallegos, was so eager for the expedition, that he sold his houses, vineyards and corn-fields, together with fourscore and ten acres of olive orchards, in the neighbourhood of Seville, and determined to take his wife with him to the new world. De Soto was so well pleased with his zeal, that he made him Alguazil Mayor. The other kinsman of Alvar Nuñez was named Christopher Spinola, a gentleman of Genoa, to whom De Soto gave the command of seventy halberdiers of his body guard.

It was soon promulgated throughout Spain that Hernando de Soto, one of the conquerors of Peru, was about to under-

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 4.

take the subjugation of the great empire of Florida, an unknown country, equal if not superior in wealth and splendour to any of the golden empires of the new world, and that he was to do this at his own expense, with the riches gained in his previous conquests.

This was enough to draw to his standard adventurers of every class. Men of noble birth, soldiers of fortune who had served in various parts of the world, private citizens and peaceful artisans, all abandoned their homes and families, sold their effects, and offered themselves and their resources for this new conquest.

A striking account is given of the arrival of a party of these volunteers. As De Soto was one day in the gallery of his house at Seville, he saw a brilliant band of cavaliers enter the court-yard, and hastened to the foot of the stairs to receive them. They were Portuguese hidalgos, led by Andres de Vasconcelos. Several of them had served in the wars against the Moors on the African frontiers, and had come to volunteer their services to De Soto, who joyfully accepted their offer. He detained them to sup with him, and ordered his steward to provide quarters for them in his neighbourhood. A muster being called of all the troops, the Spaniards appeared in splendid and showy attire, with silken doublets and cassocks pinked and embroidered. The Portuguese, on the contrary, came like soldiers, in complete armour. De Soto was vexed at the unseasonable ostentation of his countrymen, and ordered another review in which all should appear armed. Here the Portuguese again came admirably equipped, whilst the Spaniards, who had been so gaudy in their silken dresses, made but a sorry show as warriors, being armed with old rusty coats of mail, battered head pieces, and indifferent lances. The General, it is said, marked his preference of the Portuguese, by placing them near his standard. It must be observed, however, that this is the relation of a Portuguese historian, naturally disposed to give his countrymen every advantage over the Spaniards. Other accounts speak generally of the excellent equipments of all the forces.

In little more than a year from the time that this enterprise was first proclaimed, nine hundred and fifty Spaniards of all degrees had assembled in the port of San Lucar de Barra-

meda, to embark in the expedition.* Never had a more gallant and brilliant body of men offered themselves for conquest in the new world. All were young and vigorous, and fitted for the toils, hardships, and dangers of so adventurous an undertaking.

De Soto was munificent in his offers of pecuniary assistance, to aid the cavaliers in fitting themselves out according to their rank and station. Many were compelled, through necessity, to accept of these offers; others, who had means, generously declined them, deeming it more proper that they should assist than accept aid from him. Many came splendidly equipped, with rich armour, costly dresses, and a train of domestics. Indeed some young men of quality had spent a great part of their property in this manner.

Nuño Tobar, Luis de Moscoso, and several other high-born Spaniards who had distinguished themselves in the conquest of Peru, expended the greater part of their spoils in sumptuous equipments. Beside the cavaliers already specified, we may mention three brothers, relatives of the Governor, who accompanied him; Arias Tinoco and Alonzo Romo de Cardenosa, both captains of infantry, and Diego Arias Tinoco, standard-bearer to the army.

There were also enlisted in the enterprise, twelve priests, eight clergymen of inferior rank, and four monks; most of them relatives of superior officers: for, in every Spanish expedition to the new world, the conversion of the heathen was not lost sight of in the rage for conquest.

This brilliant armament embarked at San Lucar de Barrameda, on the sixth of April, 1538, in seven large and three small vessels. The governor, his wife Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, together with all his family and retinue, embarked in the largest vessel, called the San Christoval, of eight hundred tons burthen. They quitted the Spanish shore in company with a fleet of twenty-six sail bound to Mexico,† amid the braying of trumpets, and the thunder of artillery. The armament of De Soto was so bountifully supplied with naval stores, that each man was allowed double rations. This led

* The Portuguese narrator gives six hundred as the number of men assembled, but we follow the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, whose authority is corroborated by Herrera and others.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 4.

to useless waste, but the Governor was of a munificent spirit, and so elated at finding in his train such noble and gallant spirits, that he thought he could not do enough to honour and gratify them.

On the twenty-first of April, the fleet arrived off Gomera, one of the Canary Islands. On landing, they were received with great parade and courtesy by the Governor, who bore the title of Count de Gomera. He seems to have been a gay and luxurious noble, with somewhat of an amatory complexion, his domestic establishment being graced by several natural daughters. When he appeared to receive his guests, he was dressed in white from head to foot, hat, cloak, doublet, breeches and shoes; so that, according to the old Portuguese narrative, he looked not unlike the captain of a gang of gipsies. During three days that the fleet remained in port, he entertained his guests with banquetings and rejoicings.

Among his daughters was one named Leonora de Bobadilla, who particularly attracted the notice of the youthful adventurers. She was not more than seventeen years of age, and extremely beautiful. De Soto was so interested with her appearance and manners, that he entreated the Count to permit her to accompany his wife, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, who, he promised, should cherish her as her own daughter; intimating that he would procure an advantageous match for her among the noble youths of his army, and advance her to rank and fortune in the country he hoped to conquer.

The Count de Gomera, knowing the munificence of De Soto, and that he would be disposed to perform even more than he promised, confided his daughter to his care, and to the maternal protection of his high-minded and virtuous wife.

On the 24th of April, the fleet again set sail. The voyage was fair and prosperous, and about the latter end of May they arrived in the harbour of the city of Santiago de Cuba.

CHAPTER IV.

THE arrival of a new Governor, with so important an armament, was an event of great joy throughout the island of Cuba. When De Soto landed, the whole city of Santiago

turned out to receive him. He found a beautiful horse, richly caparisoned, waiting for him, and likewise a mule for Doña Isabella,—both furnished by a gentleman of the town. He was escorted to his lodgings by the burghers, on horse and on foot, and all his officers and men were hospitably entertained by them; some being quartered in the town, and others in their country houses.* For several days there was one continued festival. At night there were balls and masquerades; by day, titling matches, bull fights, contests of skill in horsemanship, running at the ring, and other amusements of a chivalrous nature.

The young cavaliers of the army vied with each other and with the youth of the city in the gallantry of their equipments, the elegance and novelty of their devices, and the wit and ingenuity of their mottoes. What gave peculiar splendour to these entertainments was the beauty, spirit, and excellence of the horses. The great demand for these noble animals, for the conquests of Mexico and Peru, and other parts of America, had rendered the raising of them a very profitable source of speculation in the islands. The island of Cuba was naturally favourable for breeding horses, and as great attention had been given to multiply and improve the breed, there was at this time an uncommon number, and of remarkably fine qualities. Many individuals had from twenty to thirty valuable horses in their stables, and some of the rich had twice that number on their estates.

The young and spirited adventurers had spared no expense in furnishing themselves with excellent steeds for their intended expedition. Many individuals possessed three or four, caparioned in a very costly manner; and the Governor aided liberally with his purse, such as had not the means of suitably equipping themselves.

Thus mounted and arrayed in their new dresses and burnished armour, the young competitors made a brilliant display, and carried off many prizes of gold and silver, silks and brocades, which were adjudged to those who distinguished themselves in these chivalrous games.

No one carried off the prize more frequently than Nuño de Tobar, the Lieutenant-General. He was, as has been said, a cavalier of high and generous qualities, who had

* Portuguese Relation, c. 4.

gained laurels in the conquest of Peru. He appeared at these entertainments in sumptuous array, mounted on a superb horse, of a silver grey dappled, and was noted for the gracefulness of his carriage, his noble demeanour, and his admirable address in the management both of lance and steed.

Unfortunately the manly qualifications of Nuño Tobar had procured him great favour in the eyes of the beautiful Leonora de Bobadilla, daughter of the Count de Gomera. A secret amour was carried on between them, and the lady's virtue was not proof against the solicitations of her lover.*

The consequences of their criminal intercourse were soon too apparent to be concealed. De Soto was incensed at what he considered an outrage upon his rights as guardian over the lady, and a violation of his confidence as a friend. He immediately deposed Nuño Tobar from his station as Lieutenant-General; and, though that really generous and spirited young soldier endeavoured to make every reparation in his power, by marrying the lady, De Soto could never afterwards be brought to look upon him with kindness.

At this time, there was on a visit to the Governor in the city of Santiago, a cavalier, upwards of fifty years of age, named Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa. He was of noble descent, and brave, having seen much hard fighting under the first Spanish leaders in the new world, as well as in Spain and Italy, where he had distinguished himself on various occasions. He now resided in the town of Trinidad in Cuba, living opulently and luxuriously upon the wealth he had gained in the wars, honoured for his exploits, loved for his social qualities, and extolled for his hearty hospitality.

This magnificent old officer had come to Santiago with a pompous retinue, to pay his court to the Governor, and witness the festivities. He passed some days in the city, and when he beheld the array of gallant cavaliers and hardy soldiers assembled for the enterprize, the splendour of their equipments, and the martial style in which they acquitted themselves, his military spirit again took fire, and forgetting his years, his past toils and troubles, and his present ease and opulence, he volunteered to follow De Soto in his anticipated career of conquest.

* Portuguese Narrative, Conq. of Florida, c. 7.

A volunteer of such military experience, ample wealth, and great influence in the island, was too important not to be received with open arms. The Governor immediately made him Lieutenant-General of the army; the post from which the gallant but unfortunate Nuño Tobar had been recently deposed.

The conduct of Vasco Porcallo, showed the policy of this appointment. He was so elated with the distinction, that he lavished his money without stint in purchasing provisions for the armada. He was magnificent too in all his appointments, camp equipage, armour and equipments, having caught the gay spirit of his youthful companions in arms. He carried with him a numerous train of Spanish, Indian and negro servants, together with a stud of thirty-six horses for his own use: whilst, with that liberality for which he was remarkable, he gave upwards of fifty horses as presents to various cavaliers of the army.

The example of this generous, though somewhat whimsical old man, had a powerful effect in animating the inhabitants of Cuba to promote the success of the expedition, and in inducing some to enrol themselves among the followers of De Soto.*

For three months the Governor made a tour of the island, visiting the principal towns, appointing officers to rule in his absence, purchasing horses, and making other provisions for his expedition. Towards the end of August, he repaired to Havana, where he was afterwards joined by his family and by all his forces. Here he remained for a time aiding the inhabitants, from the resources of his own fortune, to rebuild their houses and churches, which had recently been destroyed by French corsairs.

While thus occupied he twice despatched the Contador Juan de Añasco, in a brigantine manned with picked sailors,

* The Portuguese narrator drily asserts that Vasco Porcallo engaged in the expedition merely with a view to get slaves for his estates in Cuba. This narrator, however, is to be distrusted, when he assigns motives to the Spanish leaders, against whom he seems to have entertained a national antipathy, I have preferred the motives attributed by the Inca, as they seem borne out by facts, and by the general conduct of this veteran Porcallo, whose character though peculiar, is nevertheless essentially Spanish. Indeed, throughout the whole work of the Inca, his rich and copious facts are always in harmony with the characteristic peculiarities of his persons.

to coast along the shores of Florida, in quest of some commodious harbour, where there might be found secure anchorage, and a good landing place for the troops, and for which the expedition might sail direct.

Juan de Añasco was well fitted for such a service, uniting at once many of the best qualities of the naval and military character, and possessing some skill in nautical science. He was fond, too, of hazardous enterprises, never flinching from toils or perils, and was altogether an excellent leader, though somewhat choleric.

Three months elapsed after Añasco's departure on his second voyage, without any tidings of him having been received: great fears were consequently entertained for his safety, when, after escaping many perils, his tempest-tossed bark arrived at Havana.

No sooner did Juan de Añasco and his crew set foot upon land, than they threw themselves on their knees, and in this way crawled to church to hear mass, in fulfilment of a vow made in an hour of great peril. When this was done, they related all the dangers they had escaped on sea and land; having once been near foundering, and having passed two months on an uninhabited island, subsisting on shell-fish gathered from the beach, and upon wild fowl knocked down with clubs.

Juan de Añasco, however, had faithfully fulfilled the great object of his cruise having found a secure harbour on the coast of Florida. He brought with him, also, four of the natives whom he had captured, to serve as interpreters and guides.

All his forces being now assembled in Havana, and the season favourable for sailing being at hand, the Governor made his final arrangements, appointing his wife Doña Isabel de Bobadilla to govern the island during his absence, with Juan de Roxas, as Lieutenant-Governor, and Francisco de Guzman as his Lieutenant, in the city of Santiago. These two cavaliers had been in command prior to De Soto's arrival at the island, and had proved themselves worthy of this great mark of confidence.*

* The Inca, lib. I. c. 13. Portuguese relation, c. vii. Herrera. D. vi. l. 7. c. 9.

CHAPTER V.

WHILE the Governor was waiting for a fair wind to embark, a ship was seen hovering off the port, driven there by stress of weather, but evidently endeavouring to keep from the land. Three times it was forced to the mouth of the harbour, and as often made its way against contrary winds to the broad ocean, as if the greatest anxiety of the crew was to avoid the port. At length, after struggling four or five days against tempestuous weather, they were compelled to anchor in the harbour.

The ship came from Nombre de Dios, on the Isthmus of Panama, and the reason of this strange conduct of her commander is stated to have been as follows. On board was Hernan Ponce, an old comrade of Hernando De Soto. They had sought their fortunes together in Peru, and when the latter quitted that country for a time to visit Spain, he entered into articles of partnership, or brotherhood, as it was called, with Hernan Ponce, as was frequently done by the Spanish discoverer and soldiers of fortune in the new world. By these articles they bound themselves, during their lives, to an equal participation of gains and losses, and of all things, whether of honour or profit.

After the departure of De Soto for Spain, Hernan Ponce had amassed much wealth, and recovered several debts which De Soto had left with him to be collected. Having turned all his property into gold and silver, jewels and precious stones, he embarked for Spain, but, at the port of embarkation, heard of the new enterprise of his old comrade, De Soto, and that he was at Havana with a great and expensive armament appointed for the conquest of Florida.

Hernan Ponce had no ambition to join in the conquest; for he feared that De Soto, having expended all his own wealth upon his outfits, would claim his right of partnership, and seek to share the treasures which his former comrade was carrying home, if not to grasp the whole. Hernan Ponce, therefore, anxious to steer clear of the port of Havana and to pursue his voyage, had made large offers to the mariners to induce them to keep out at sea, but tempestuous weather had forced them into port. No sooner did Hernando

De Soto hear of his friend's arrival, than he sent persons on board to congratulate him, and invite him on shore to share his house, his possessions, and all his honours and commands. He shortly followed in person, repeating his congratulations and offers.

Hernan Ponce would gladly have dispensed both with compliments and confraternity. He quaked in secret for the safety of his treasures. He affected, however, to reciprocate the joy and good-will of his former comrade, but excused himself from landing until the following day, pleading the necessity of rest and sleep, after the fatigues of the late tempest. De Soto left him to his repose, but suspecting, or having had some intimation of his real circumstances and designs, he secretly stationed sentinels by sea and land to keep a watch upon the movements of his ancient partner. His precautions were not vain. About midnight, Hernan Ponce landed two coffers, containing all his gold, pearls, and precious stones, to be concealed in some hamlet, or buried on the shore, leaving only the silver on board, to keep up appearances; intending to pass it off as the whole of his wealth.

No sooner had the mariners landed the coffers, and carried them some distance from the boat, than a party of sentinels rushed out from a thicket, put them to flight, and seizing upon the treasure, conveyed it to the Governor.

The confusion and distress of Hernan Ponce, at thus losing, by a measure intended for its safety, what he had been at such pains to secure, may easily be imagined. He landed the next day with a sorrowful countenance, and took up his abode with De Soto.

In the course of their private conversation, he soon revealed the misfortune of the preceding night. The Governor, who had been waiting for the opportunity, now indignantly reproached him with having attempted to conceal his treasures, through want of faith in his justice and friendship, but to show him how groundless had been his distrust, he ordered the coffers to be brought in, and requested his former companion to open them, and see if any thing were missing.

He further declared, that all he had expended in his present undertaking, all the titles, commands, and privileges

he had obtained from the crown, he had considered for their mutual benefit, according to their terms of co-partnership and confraternity. This he offered to prove by witnesses then with him, who had been present at the execution of the writings. He now asked whether Hernan Ponce chose to accompany him in his conquest or not, declaring himself ready to share with him his titles and commands, or to yield to him such of them as he might prefer.

The selfish Spaniard, Hernan Ponce, was confounded as much by the generous courtesy of the Governor, as by a sense of his own delinquency: nevertheless, his heart yearned more after his own treasures, than after all De Soto's anticipated conquests. He excused himself as well as he could for the past, pretended to be highly gratified at being still considered De Soto's partner and brother, but declined all participation in his titles. He begged that their writings of co-partnership might be renewed and made public, and that his Excellency would proceed with his conquest; while he returned to Spain, leaving to some future occasion the division of all their gains. To testify his acceptance of one half of the conquest, he entreated his friend to permit his wife, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, to receive ten thousand dollars in gold and silver towards the expenses of the expedition, being half of what he had brought from Peru.

De Soto granted his request; the ten thousand dollars were paid into the hands of Doña Isabel, the articles of co-partnership renewed, and during the whole stay of Hernan Ponce at Havana, he was always addressed as his Excellency, and received the same personal honours as the Governor.

The heart of Hernan Ponce, however, was with his money-bags, and delighted not in these empty honours. Under various pretexts, he deferred sailing for Spain until after the embarkation of De Soto and his army for Florida. Eight days after the Governor had sailed, and when there was no longer a likelihood of his prompt return, Hernan Ponce addressed a memorial in writing to Juan de Rojas, the Lieutenant-Governor, declaring that the ten thousand dollars given to Hernando de Soto, had not been paid as a just debt, but through fear lest the Governor should make use of his power to strip him of all his property. He begged, therefore, that Doña Isabel de Bobadilla might be compelled

to refund the sum thus tyrannically obtained, otherwise he should complain to the Emperor of the injustice with which he had been treated.

When Doña Isabel heard of this claim, she immediately replied, that there were many accounts, both new and old, to be settled between Hernan Ponce and her husband, as would be seen by the writings of co-partnership. By those writings it would also appear, that Hernan Ponce owed her husband more than fifty thousand ducats, being half of the amount expended in the outfit for the projected conquest. She demanded, therefore, that Hernan Ponce should be arrested and held in bond until all these accounts could be examined and adjusted, which she offered immediately to attend to, in the name of her husband.

Hernan Ponce obtained a hint of the new troubles preparing for him, and fearing, should he fall into the hands of justice, that he would meet with little mercy, he hoisted sail before the harpies of the law could get hold of him, and made the best of his way to Spain, leaving his ten thousand dollars and all the unsettled accounts in the hands of Doña Isabel.* Having thus disposed of this episode, we will step back eight days in our chronology, to relate the sailing of the expedition for Florida.

CHAPTER VI.

ON the 12th of May 1539, Hernando de Soto sailed from Havana on his great enterprise. His squadron consisted of eight large vessels, a caravel and two brigantines, all freighted with ample means of conquest and of colonization. In addition to the forces brought from Spain, he had been joined by many volunteers and recruits in Cuba; thus his armament, beside the ship's crews, amounted to a thousand men,—the horses to three hundred and fifty. It was altogether the most splendid expedition that had yet set out for the new world:

The squadron was driven by contrary winds into the Gulf of Mexico, where it remained for several days. At length, on Whitsunday, the twenty-fifth of May, it arrived at the

* Hist. of Florida per el Inca, Lib. i. c. 14, 15.

mouth of a deep bay, to which, in honour of the day, De Soto gave the name of Espiritu Santo, which it still retains.

The expedition had scarcely arrived on the coast, when they beheld fires blazing along the shore, and columns of smoke rising in different directions. It was evident the natives had taken alarm, and were summoning their warriors. De Soto, therefore, observed the precaution not to disembark his troops, but remained several days on board the ships; sounding the harbour, and seeking a secure landing place. Meanwhile a boat was sent on shore to procure grass for the horses. The sailors brought off also a quantity of green grapes, which had been found growing wild in the woods. They resembled those of Spain, and were of a kind different from any that the Spaniards had seen either in Mexico or Peru. They regarded them with exultation as proofs of a fruitful country.

At length, on the last day of the month, a detachment of three hundred soldiers landed, and took formal possession of the country, in the name of Charles V. Not a single Indian was to be seen, and the troops remained all night on shore, in a state of careless security. Towards the dawn, however, an immense number of savages broke suddenly upon them with deafening yells. Several Spaniards were wounded with arrows; many were seized with panic, as new-levied troops are apt to be in their first encounter, especially when in a strange land and assailed by strange foes. They retreated to the beach in great confusion, crowding so closely together as to prevent each other from fighting to advantage, and sounding an alarm with drum and trumpet.

The din of this tumult was heard on board the fleet. Those seemingly lifeless hulks were immediately as busy as swarms of bees, when their republic is invaded: armour was buckled on in haste, and a reinforcement quickly landed. The Lieutenant-General, Vasco Porcallo, with seven horsemen, took the lead, not a little pleased at having so early an opportunity of displaying his prowess. Dashing his spurs into his horse's sides, and brandishing his lance, he charged the savages, who fled after a faint resistance. He pursued them for a while, and then returned highly elated at the success of this first encounter.

Scarcely had he reached the camp, however, when his

horse staggered under him and fell dead, having been wounded by an arrow in the course of the skirmish. The shaft had been sent with such force as to pass through the saddle and its housings, and bury itself, one third of its length, between the animal's ribs, Vasco Porcallo rose triumphant from his fall, vaunting that the first horse which had fallen in this expedition was his, and his the first lance raised against the infidels.

The remainder of the troops were now disembarked and encamped on the borders of the bay, where they remained a few days, reposing after the fatigues of their voyage. They then marched to a village situated about two leagues down the coast. The ships being lightened by the landing of the troops, were enabled, with the aid of the tide, to take their station opposite.

The village was deserted by the inhabitants. It consisted of several large houses, built of wood and thatched with palm leaves. At one end stood a kind of temple, on the top of which was the image of a bird made of wood, with gilded eyes. In this edifice was found a quantity of pearls of small value, having been injured by fire, in boring them for necklaces and bracelets.

In an opposite quarter of the village was the dwelling of the Cacique, built upon an artificial eminence, near the shore, and so constructed as to serve as a fortress. Here the Governor took up his residence, with his Lieutenant, the veteran Porcallo, and his Camp-Master, Luis de Moscoso. The other houses were converted into barracks for the troops, and store-houses for provisions and ammunition which had been brought on shore from the vessels. The ground was cleared round the village to the distance of a bow-shot, so as to give room for the cavalry to act in case of a sudden surprise in the night, which recent experience had taught the Spaniards to guard against. Sentinels also were placed at every point, and parties of horsemen patrolled the neighbourhood.

The Governor at length succeeded in capturing a few straggling Indians, natives of the place, from whom he learned the cause of their countrymen's fierce hostility, and of their deserting the village. He had come upon the traces of his predecessor, Pamphilo de Narvaez, who had unfortunately

committed the most cruel outrages. Narvaez in his expedition to Florida had been bravely opposed by the Cacique of this village, whose name was Hirrihigua,* but having at length succeeded in winning his friendship, a treaty was formed between them. Subsequently, however, Narvaez became enraged at the Cacique for some unknown reason, and in a transport of passion ordered his nose to be cut off, and his mother to be torn to pieces by dogs. These merciless wrongs, as may well be supposed, had filled the heart of Hirrihigua with the bitterest hatred of white men.

De Soto, having heard this story, endeavoured to appease the Cacique and to gain his friendship. For this purpose, he treated in the kindest manner his subjects whom he had captured; and sent them, laden with presents, to seek their chieftain in his retreat, and invite him to amicable intercourse. The Cacique was offended with his subjects for daring to bring him messages from a race who had injured him so deeply. "I want neither their speeches nor promises," said he, bitterly; "bring me their heads, and I will receive them joyfully."

De Soto reluctant to leave so powerful a foe between himself and his ships, endeavoured by repeated envoys to soften the animosity of the Cacique: but every message only provoked a more bitter and scornful reply.

While negotiating with this vindictive savage, De Soto received intelligence that there was a Spaniard, a survivor of the followers of Pamphilo de Narvaez, living under the protection of a neighbouring Cacique called Mucozo.† To

* We give the name according to Garcilaso de la Vega: the Portuguese historian calls the Cacique Ucita. These two authorities often differ as to Indian names. Sometimes they merely vary in the spelling, as is natural where the names were caught by ear, and did not originally exist in writing. At other times they differ entirely; one narrator having probably heard a village and province called by its proper and permanent name, the other by the name of its Cacique. These discrepancies are common and unavoidable, in the narratives of adventurers among savage tribes, whose language is unwritten and but little understood. Where irreconcilable differences occur, we are generally inclined to follow the Inca, as he received his facts from three different members of the expedition, one a gentleman of rank, the other two, private soldiers; whereas the Portuguese account has merely the authority of a single witness. The account of the transactions on landing are chiefly taken from the Inca, and occasionally from the Portuguese narrative.

† Mocoso. Portuguese Narrative.

obtain the services of this Spaniard was now a matter of great moment, for, having lived upwards of ten years in the country, he had become acquainted with the language and customs of the natives, and was consequently well fitted to act as guide, interpreter, and negotiator. De Soto accordingly despatched Baltazar de Gallegos, chief Alguazil, at the head of sixty lancers, and under the guidance of a native Indian, on an embassy to the Cacique Mucozo, to obtain the Spaniard's release, and invite the chieftain to his camp, with assurances of friendship and munificent rewards.

As this Spaniard was subsequently of great service throughout the expedition, and as his story is illustrative of the character and customs of the natives, and of the implacable resentment of the Cacique Hirrihigua, we will diverge for a moment from the main course of our narrative, to relate some particulars of his adventures.

CHAPTER VII.

SHORTLY after Pamphilo de Narvaez had quitted the village of Hirrihigua on his disastrous march into the interior, a small vessel of his fleet, which was in quest of him, put into the bay of Espiritu Santo. Anchoring before the town, they saw a few Indians on the shore, who made signs for them to land, pointing to a letter at the end of a cleft reed, stuck into the ground. The Spaniards supposing, and probably with justice, that it was a letter of instruction left by Narvaez, giving information of his movements and destination, made signs for the Indians to bring it to them. The latter, however, refused, but getting into a canoe came on board, four of them offering to remain as hostages for such Spaniards as chose to go on shore for the letter. Four Spaniards immediately stepped into the canoe. The moment they landed, a multitude of savages rushed out of the village and surrounded them; at the same time, the hostages on board plunged into the sea and swam to land. The crew of the vessel, seeing the number of the enemy, and dreading some further mischief, made sail with all haste, abandoning their luckless comrades to their fate.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega. Part 1. L. 2. c. 1. Portuguese Narrative, c. 9. Herrera. D. 6. L. 7. c. 10.

The captives were conveyed with savage triumph into the village of Hirrihigua; for the whole had been a stratagem of that Cacique, to get into his power some of the white men, upon whom he might wreak his vengeance. He placed his prisoners under a strong guard, until the day of a religious festival. They were then stripped naked, led out into the public square of the village and turned loose, one at a time, to be shot at with arrows. To prolong their misery and the enjoyment of their tormentors, only one Indian was allowed to shoot at a time. In this way the first three Spaniards were sacrificed, and the Cacique took a vindictive pleasure in beholding them, running in their agony from corner to corner, vainly seeking an asylum in every nook, until after being repeatedly wounded, they were shot to death.

Juan Ortiz, a lad, scarcely eighteen years old, and of a noble family, was the fourth victim. As they were leading him forth, his extreme youth touched with compassion the hearts of the wife and daughters of the Cacique, who interceded in his favour.

Hirrihigua listened to their importunities, and, for the present, granted the life of Ortiz;—but it proved to be a most wretched boon. From morning until evening he was employed in carrying wood and water, being allowed but little sleep, and less food. Not a day passed that he was not beaten. On festivals he was an object of barbarous amusement to the Cacique, who would oblige him to run from sunrise to sunset, in the public square of the village, where his companions had been so barbarously sacrificed. Upon those occasions, a number of Indians were stationed at different parts of the quadrangle with bows and arrows, to shoot him, should he halt one moment. When the day was spent, the unfortunate youth lay stretched on the hard floor of his hut, more dead than alive. At such times the chief's wife and daughters would come to him privately with food and clothing, and by their kind treatment his life was preserved.

At length the Cacique being determined to put an end to his victim's existence, ordered that he should be bound upon a wooden frame, in the form of a huge gridiron, placed over a bed of burning coals, and roasted alive.

The cries and shrieks of the miserable sufferer reached his female protectors, and their entreaties were once more suc-

cessful with the Cacique. They unbound Ortiz, dragged him from the fire, and took him to their dwelling, where they bathed his wounds with the juice of herbs, and tended him with assiduous care. After many days he recovered, though his body was marked with many a deep scar.

His employment was now to guard the village cemetery, which was in a lonely field in the bosom of a forest. The bodies of the dead were deposited in wooden boxes, covered with boards, without any fastening except a stone or a log of wood laid upon the top; so that the bodies were often carried away by wild beasts.

In this cemetery, Ortiz was stationed with a bow and arrows, to watch day and night, and was told, that should a single body be carried away, he would be burnt alive. He returned thanks to God for having freed him from the dreaded presence of Hirrihigua, hoping to lead a better life with the dead than he had lately done with the living.

Upon one occasion while he was watching, towards morning sleep overpowered him. Being awakened by the lid of one of the chests suddenly falling, upon examination he found that the body had disappeared. The chest had contained the corpse of an infant recently deceased,—the child of an Indian of note.

Ortiz supposing some animal had dragged it away, immediately set out in pursuit. After wandering for some time, at a short distance within the woods, he heard a noise like that of a dog gnawing bones. Drawing near to the spot with a stealthy step, he dimly perceived a living object among the bushes, and invoking aid from on high, discharged an arrow at it. The thick and tangled underwood prevented him from seeing the effect of his shot, but as the animal did not stir, he flattered himself that he had killed it. With this hope he waited until the day dawned, when he beheld his victim, a huge creature of the panther kind,* lying dead, the arrow having passed through its entrails and pierced its heart.

Gathering together the mangled remains of the infant, and replacing them in the coffin, Ortiz dragged his prey in triumph to the village, with the arrow still in its body. The

* The Inca calls this animal a lion, as the Spanish discoverers were in the habit of calling animals of the tiger or panther kind.

exploit gained him credit with the old hunters, and for some time softened even the ferocity of Hirrihigua. The resentment of the latter, however, for the wrongs he had suffered from white men was too bitter to be appeased. Some time after his eldest daughter came to Ortiz and warned him that her father had determined to sacrifice him at the next festival, which was just at hand. She stated that the influence of her mother, her sisters, and herself, would be no longer of any avail to save him, and therefore wished that he should take refuge with a neighbouring Cacique named Mucozo, who had sought her in marriage, and would befriend him for her sake. "This very night," said the kind-hearted maiden, "at the northern extremity of the village, you will find a trusty friend who will guide you to a bridge about two leagues hence: on arriving there, you must send him back, that he may reach home before the morning dawns, to avoid suspicion—for well he knows that this bold act, in daring to assist you, may bring down destruction upon us both. Six leagues further on you will reach the village of Mucozo. Tell him that I have sent you, and expect him to befriend you in your extremity. I know he will do it. Go, and may your God protect you!" Ortiz threw himself at the feet of his generous protectress, and poured out his acknowledgments for the kindness she had always shown him. An Indian was at the place appointed to direct him, and they quitted the village without alarming the warlike savages. When they came to the bridge, Ortiz sent back the guide, in obedience to the injunction of his mistress, and continuing his flight found himself, by break of day, on the banks of a small stream near the village of Mucozo.

Looking cautiously round, he saw two natives fishing. As he was unacquainted with their language, and could not explain the cause of his appearance in their neighbourhood, he was in dread lest they should take him for an enemy and kill him. He, therefore, ran swiftly to the place where they had deposited their weapons and seized them. The savages fled to the village, without attending to his signs of friendly intention. The inhabitants sallied out armed with bows and arrows, and were about to attack him; but Ortiz fixing an arrow in his bow prepared for defence, crying out at the same moment, that he came not as an enemy, but as an

ambassador from a female Cacique to their chief. Fortunately one present understood him, and interpreted his words. Upon this the Indians unbent their bows, and returning with him to their village, presented him to Mucozo. The latter, a youthful chieftain, of a graceful form and handsome countenance, received Ortiz kindly for the sake of her who had sent him; but, on further acquaintance, became attached to him for his own merits, and treated him with the affection of a brother.

Hirrihigua soon heard where the fugitive had taken refuge, and demanded several times that he should be delivered up. Mucozo as often declined; considering himself bound by the laws of honour and hospitality to protect him. Hirrihigua then employed as mediator another Cacique, a brother-in-law of Mucozo, who went in person to demand Ortiz. The generous Mucozo, however, indignantly refused to deliver up to a cruel enemy, the poor fugitive who had come so well recommended to his protection, and treated the request as a stain upon his honour. The two Caciques continued their importunities, but the high-minded savage remained faithful to his guest, though in maintaining inviolate the sacred rites of hospitality, he lost the friendship of his brother-in-law, and forfeited the hand of Hirrihigua's beautiful daughter, whom he tenderly loved.

CHAPTER VIII.

1539. AT this juncture tidings reached Mucozo of De Soto's arrival at the village of Hirrihigua, with his troops, and that it was their intention to conquer the country. The Cacique, alarmed at this intelligence, addressed himself thus to Ortiz: "You well know," said he, "what I have done for you; that I sheltered you when you were friendless, and have chosen rather to fall into disgrace with my relations and neighbours, than deliver you into the hands of your enemies. This I have done without thought or hope of reward, but the time is now come when you can requite my friendship. Go to the chieftain of this army of white men which has arrived, make known to him the asylum I have given you, and which, under the same circumstances, I would have

afforded to any of your countrymen—entreat him, in return, not to lay waste my small territory, and assure him that I and mine are ready to devote ourselves to his service.”

Ortiz gladly departed on the mission, accompanied by fifty chosen warriors. It happened that about the same time Baltazar de Gallegos had been dispatched, as has been already mentioned, on his embassy to Mucozo.

As Ortiz and his Indian escort were on their way to the village of Hirrihigua, they came in sight of Baltazar and his band, whose lances glistened at a distance, amidst a verdant plain, skirted by a wood.

The Indians would have concealed themselves in the forest, until the Christians could be informed that they were friends; but Ortiz, rejecting their advice, insisted that his countrymen would at once recognise him; not reflecting that in appearance he did not differ from his savage companions, being, like them, almost naked, his body bronzed by exposure to the sun, his arms painted, having a quiver at his back, a bow and arrow in his hand, and his head adorned with feathers.

No sooner did the Spaniards perceive the savages, than they came down upon them at full gallop, heedless of the voice of their captain; for they were newly raised soldiers, full of spirit, and eager for a contest with the natives.

The Indians, seeing their furious approach, fled terrified to the wood. One of their number, however, being bewildered, or possessing more courage than the rest, loitered behind. He was pursued by a Spaniard, and before he could attain the shelter of the adjacent thicket, was overtaken by the trooper's lance. Juan Ortiz was assaulted by Alvaro Nieto, one of the stoutest and boldest troopers in the army, who charged him with his lance. Ortiz parried the thrust with his bow, at the same time leaping from side to side with great agility to avoid the horse, crying out lustily *Xivilla*, *Xivilla*—meaning *Seville*, *Seville*; and making the sign of the cross with his arm and bow, to signify that he was a Christian.

Alvaro Nieto hearing him cry out *Xivilla*, demanded whether he was Juan Ortiz. On his replying in the affirmative, Nieto seized him by the arm, lifted him upon the croup of his horse, and scoured over the plain to present him to Baltazar de Gallegos. The captain received him with great joy, and ordered his troopers to be immediately recalled, for

they were in the woods, hunting the poor Indians like so many deer.

Ortiz himself went into the forest and called with a loud voice to the Indians, to come out of the thickets and fear nothing. Many of them, however, were panic-struck and fled back to their village, to acquaint Mucozo with what had happened. Others joined Ortiz in small parties, upbraiding him with his rashness, but when they found one of their people wounded they were so exasperated, that they would have laid violent hands upon the Spaniard, had not his countrymen been present.

They were at length pacified. The soldiers bound up the wounds of the Indian, and placed him upon a horse. The troopers, having taken up all the savages behind them, galloped away for the encampment of the Governor. Previously to setting off, however, Ortiz despatched a messenger to Mucozo, with a true account of the late events, lest that Cacique should be irritated at the statement carried to him by the terrified fugitives.*

The night was already far advanced when Baltazar de Gallegos and his band reached the camp. The Governor hearing the tramp of horses, was filled with alarm, suspecting some mischance had befallen them, as he did not look for them before the expiration of three days. His apprehensions, however, were soon turned to rejoicing. He gave Gallegos and his men credit for the success of their expedition, and received Ortiz as his own son, sympathizing with him in his past sufferings, at the same time presenting him with a suit of clothes, with arms, and a good horse.† De Soto treated the Indians who accompanied him with every mark of kindness, and ordered the wounded savage to be taken care of. He then despatched two of the natives to Mucozo, thanking him for his past benevolence to Ortiz, accepting his offers of friendship, and inviting him to the Spanish camp. Not an eye was closed that night, but one and all joined in the revelry which welcomed the liberation of poor Ortiz.

On the third day after the envoys had been despatched,

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 8. Herrera, D. 6, L. 7. c. 9.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 7. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. L. 2. c. 7. Herrera, Decad. 6. L. 7. c. 10.

the Cacique Mucozo arrived, accompanied by his warriors. He kissed the Governor's hand with great veneration, saluted each of the officers, and made a slight obeisance to the privates. De Soto received him with affectionate courtesy, and assured him that his people would be ever grateful to him for all his past kindnesses.

"What I have done unto Ortiz," said Mucozo, "is but little indeed; he came well recommended to me, and threw himself upon my protection. There is a law of our tribe, which forbids our betraying a fugitive who solicits an asylum. But his own virtue and dauntless courage entitled him to all the respect which has been shown him. That I have pleased your people I rejoice exceedingly, and by devoting myself, henceforth, to their service, I hope to merit their esteem."

These words were uttered with so much grace, the Cacique's bearing was so noble, his manner so full of kindness, that De Soto and his officers were touched, and made presents to him and to his warriors.

Two days afterwards, the mother of Mucozo came to the camp, overwhelmed with grief because her son was in the Christians' power. She would not have consented to his visiting the army, had she been present at the time of his departure. She passionately entreated the Governor to deliver up her son, and not serve him as Narvaez had served Hirrihigua. "He is young," said she; "only give him his liberty, and take me, who am a poor old woman, and treat me as you please. I will bear any punishment for both." De Soto endeavoured to reassure her by expressions of gratitude and friendship towards her son and herself; but though she remained three days in the camp, and was treated by every one with no less kindness than respect, she continued anxious and suspicious. She ate at the table of the Governor, but would partake of nothing until Ortiz had tasted it, fearing she might be poisoned. "How is this," said a Spaniard to her, "that you who offered to die for your son, have now so great a fear of death?"

"I have the same love of life as other mortals," she replied, "but most willingly would I lose it to save a son, who is far dearer to me than life itself!"

Even when assured of her son's perfect liberty, and that

he only remained for a time with the Spaniards through choice, because they were young and generous spirits like himself, she was but poorly comforted, and departed in sorrow. On quitting the Spanish camp, she took Juan Ortiz aside, and besought him to liberate Mucozo, as the latter had saved him from the hands of Hirrihigua.

The Cacique remained with the army eight days, during which time he became very familiar with the Spaniards, and was inspired with perfect confidence in them. He went home well contented, and frequently afterwards visited the Governor, bringing always a number of presents.*

CHAPTER IX.

1539. While these things were passing in the camp, the provisions and military stores were landed from the caravels, and secured in the village of Hirrihigua. The Adelantado, following the example of Cortes and other renowned captains, despatched seven of the largest vessels to Havana, in order that his followers might lose all hope of quitting the country; retaining only a caravel and two brigantines to protect the sea-coast and bay.†

He appointed to the command of this important post Pedro Calderon, a hardy veteran, nursed in a rough school, amid camps and battle scenes, having served in his youth under the great Captain Gonsalvo de Cordova.

De Soto left no means untried to gain the friendship of Hirrihigua, being aware that the example of this powerful chieftain would have great weight with the neighbouring Caciques. Accordingly, in foraging the adjacent country, whenever the troopers captured a vassal of this Cacique, the Governor instantly sent him home loaded with presents and charged with kind messages, urging Hirrihigua to accept his offered alliance, and promising every reparation for the wrongs inflicted upon him by Pamphilo de Narvaez. These wrongs, however, were too deep to be easily obliterated from the stern bosom of the savage. The only reply he deigned to give was, "The memory of my injuries forbid me sending

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. L. 2. c. 7, 8

† Herrera, Hist. Ind. Decad. vi. L. vii. c. 10.

a kind answer, and a harsh one your courtesy will not allow me to return." Still these constant and unwearied exertions of De Soto in some measure mitigated the Cacique's deadly rancour against the Spaniards.

The Governor made many inquiries of Ortiz respecting the country, and whether there was any district abounding with gold and silver. Ortiz knew of none such, and could give but little information. During his bitter servitude under Hirrihigua, he had been closely watched, and not allowed to wander: and although while dwelling with Mucozo he had enjoyed perfect liberty, yet he dared not venture far, through fear of being way-laid by his enemies. He had heard much, however, of a Cacique named Urribarracaxi, whose village was thirty leagues distant. He was said to be the most powerful chieftain of the country. To him Mucozo, Hirrihigua, and all the other Caciques of the coast paid tribute, and his territories were far more fertile than those nearer the sea.*

The Governor despatched Baltazar de Gallegos on an expedition to the village of this powerful chief. Gallegos chose the same sixty lancers who had accompanied him when he went in search of Juan Ortiz, and likewise sixty foot soldiers, armed with cross-bows and bucklers. He was accompanied by Ortiz as guide and interpreter. On approaching the village of Mucozo, that Cacique came out to receive them, and entertained them for the night with great hospitality. Next morning the Captain demanded a guide to the village of Urribarracaxi. The Cacique at first thought that his designs upon the village were hostile, and shrank with a noble spirit from what would have been an act of perfidy against his relative and neighbour. When he found, however, that the Spaniards were on a friendly errand, and only wanted one of his vassals to go before and inform Urribarracaxi of their amicable intentions, he gladly furnished them with an Indian for the purpose, who had been a friend of Juan Ortiz.

The Spaniards had been occasionally impeded by morasses during their progress into the interior: these became less frequent the further they went from the sea. In the course

* Portuguese Relation, c. 9. The name of the Cacique in the Portuguese Narrative is Paracoxi. We follow the Inca.

of their journey, they observed many trees similar to those of Spain, such as walnut, oak, mulberry, plum, pine, and evergreen oak. There were wild grapes also in abundance.

The distance from the village of Mucozo, to that of his brother-in-law was about seventeen leagues. The adventurers arrived there in four days, but found it deserted, the inhabitants having fled to the woods. Gallegos sent his envoy repeatedly to the Cacique, with the most friendly messages, but every effort to draw him from his retreat proved fruitless, though he manifested no hostility either by word or deed. The Spanish leader made diligent inquiry of the Indians he met with, if there was any province where gold and silver might be found. They replied that there was a country to the westward called Ocali, the inhabitants of which were continually at war with the people of another province, where the spring lasted all the year long, and gold was so plenty that their warriors wore head-pieces of that precious metal.*

1539. After Hernando de Soto had despatched Gallegos to explore the country, he received intelligence that the Cacique Hirrihigua was concealed in a forest at no great distance from the camp. The Governor was about to send a captain with an armed force in quest of him, when the enterprise was claimed by Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa. This brave old cavalier had a passion for military exploits, and was withal a little vain-glorious. He thought this a fit opportunity to signalize himself, and insisted upon having the honour of capturing the formidable though fugitive Cacique. His desire being acceded to, he prepared for it in his usual way, being fond of parade, and liberal in all his appointments. Having selected a band of horsemen and foot soldiers, he put himself at their head and sallied from the camp, well mounted, and cased in glittering armour, boasting that he would bring home Hirrihigua either a prisoner or a friend.†

He had not proceeded far, however, when he was met by an Indian messenger, sent by Hirrihigua, who had received intelligence from his spies of the armed force marching in

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 10.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1, L. 2, c. 9. Herrera, Hist. Ind. Decad. 6, L. 7. c. 10.

quest of him. This messenger entreated Vasco Porcallo on the part of Hirrihigua, not to proceed further, as the Cacique was in so secure a fortress that, with all his exertions, the Spanish leader would be unable to obtain an entrance: but that both he and his troops would be exposed to infinite perils from the rivers, morasses and tangled forests, which they would have to pass. The Cacique added, that he gave this advice, not through any fear for himself, but in consequence of the forbearance manifested by the Spaniards, in not injuring his territory, or his subjects.

Vasco Porcallo listened to the messenger with incredulity; persuading himself that fear, not gratitude nor courtesy, dictated the message: he therefore ordered the trumpet to sound, and marched on. As he advanced, messenger after messenger met him, all repeating the warning to return, and at length these became so numerous as almost to overtake each other. The more, however, he was warned to return, the more obstinately did the stout-hearted, but hot-headed old soldier persist in advancing: taking every thing by contraries, and judging of the Cacique's panic, by the frequency of his messages. His only fear was that the prize might escape him. Under this impression, he spurred on hotly with his troops, until they arrived at a vast and dangerous morass.

Here his men perceived the truth of the warnings they had received, and began to remonstrate upon the danger of attempting the morass. Vasco Porcallo, however, had put himself too much on his mettle in this enterprise to be easily daunted. He insisted upon their entering; but, knowing from experience the effect of setting an example in time of difficulty, he put spurs to his horse, dashed forward, and his men followed him pell mell into the morass. Vasco Porcallo had not proceeded far, however, when, coming to a deep part of the swamp, his horse floundered and fell. The peril of the Lieutenant-General was imminent; his horse had fallen upon one of its rider's legs so as to fix him down, while the weight of his armour contributed to sink him into the mire. Both horse and rider were in danger of suffocation, nor could any one afford them relief, as all who entered would be exposed to similar peril.

At length the cavalier having, with infinite difficulty,

extricated himself and steed from the bog, stood once more on firm ground, covered with mud. All his vain glory was at an end, he was out of humour with himself, and felt humbled in the sight of his soldiers. The savage whom he had come to fight and capture, instead of encountering him with deadly weapons, had conquered him by courteous and friendly messages, and his vain-glorious enterprize had ended in a struggle in a quagmire.

Ordering his men to face about, he set out on his return to the camp, in a far different mood from that in which he had sallied forth. Amidst the mortifications of his present plight, he called to mind the comfortable home he had left behind, at Cuba, and the easy life he had led there. He reflected that he was no longer a boy ; that the vigour of his days was past ; that his present disaster was but a slight foretaste of the toils and troubles which must attend this expedition of conquest ; and came at length to the conclusion, that as he was not obliged to encounter them, he had better return home, and leave the conquest of Florida to the younger adventurers who were embarked in it.

Revolving these and similar thoughts in his mind, the worthy old cavalier, all bedabbled, bemired, and totally crest-fallen, rode along in querulous, yet half-whimsical humour, muttering to himself.

Vasco Porcallo arrived at the camp in a state of moody dissatisfaction. All his dreams of conquest were at an end. The martial fire which he had caught from the young soldiers of the army, and which had blazed up so suddenly in his bosom, had been as suddenly extinguished. He only thought now, how to get rid of his command of Lieutenant-General, and return to his comfortable home in Cuba. With these views he presented himself at once before De Soto, and stating his reasons with honest force and hearty sincerity, applied for permission to resign. The Governor granted it with the same promptness with which he had accepted his offer to join the enterprise, and moreover, furnished him with the galliot San Anton to convey him back to the island.

The worthy veteran was now as eager to abandon the expedition as he had been to join it. His train of servants, Spanish, Indian, and negro, were embarked with all speed ;

but when the gallant old cavalier came to take leave of his young companions in arms, and the soldiers he had lately aspired to lead so vain-gloriously, his generous spirit displayed itself. He divided among the officers and knights all the arms, accoutrements, horses, and camp equipage with which he had come so ostentatiously provided; and he gave for the use of the expedition all the stores which he had purchased for himself and his retinue. He then set sail for Cuba, much to the regret of the army, who lamented that so gallant a cavalier was about to be withdrawn from their confederation.

The only person who remained behind of Vasco Porcallo's retinue was Gomez Suarez de Figueroa, his natural son, by an Indian woman in Cuba, with whom he left two horses, arms, and other necessities. Throughout this expedition this youth conducted himself as a good knight and soldier, and a worthy son of such a father, serving with great promptitude upon all occasions.*

CHAPTER X.

1539. ON the day after the departure of Vasco Porcallo, a young cavalier named Gonzalo Silvestre, followed by three other horsemen, rode into the camp, bearing dispatches from Baltazar de Gallegos. They brought favourable accounts of the country he had explored, with assurances that, in the village of Urribarracaxi and its neighbourhood, there were provisions enough to sustain the army for several days.

There was but one drawback on this favourable intelligence, which was, that beyond the town of Urribarracaxi there extended a vast swamp, exceedingly difficult to be traversed. The Spaniards, however, ripe for action and adventure, made light of this obstacle, averring that God had provided man with genius and dexterity to make his way through every difficulty.

Satisfied from the dispatches just received, that he might readily penetrate into the interior, the Governor issued orders for every one to prepare for marching on the fourth day. In the mean time he commanded Gonzalo Silvestre to return to

* The Inca. P. I. L. 2, c. 11.

Baltazar de Gallegos with twenty horsemen, and inform him that the army would join him without further delay.

As there was a great quantity of arms, ammunition, and provisions in the village of Hirrihigua, a garrison of forty horsemen and eighty foot soldiers was left there, under the command of Pedro Calderon, who had charge also of the shipping in the harbour, consisting of a caravel and two brigantines with their crews.

They were enjoined to remain quiet, and not move to any other place without orders from De Soto; to cultivate peace with the neighbouring Indians, and not make war upon them even though they should be taunted and insulted;—above all, to treat Mucozo with marked friendship.

Having made these arrangements, and trusting, as well he might, in Pedro Calderon as a good soldier and discreet Captain, on the appointed day, De Soto set out with his main force, from the village of Hirrihigua. It was an arduous task to conduct such a body of troops, encumbered with armour and all kinds of baggage and supplies, through a wilderness, exposed to constant hardships, unforeseen dangers, and a wild kind of warfare, to which most of his soldiers were entirely unaccustomed.

As it was a leading object with the Governor, to found a colony, he was encumbered with many things that embarrassed the march of his army. Among these were three hundred swine, with which he intended to stock the country should he succeed in forming a settlement, having found them the most advantageous stock for the subsistence of new colonies. These animals were placed in charge of a company of horse, to keep them in the line of march, and guard them while traversing the swamps and rivers.

Besides the match-locks and cross-bows with which the infantry were armed, there was one piece of ordnance in the army, that must have cost them vast labour to transport, though it appears never to have rendered any efficient service.

After two days' march, to the north-east, on the morning of the third day De Soto came in sight of the village of Mucozo. The Cacique came forth to receive him, expressing great grief at his intended departure from the country, and entreating him to remain that night in his village. The Governor, however, excused himself, not wishing to task the

hospitality of this generous Indian with such a multitude of guests, but again expressed his thanks for the kindness shown by the Cacique to Juan Ortiz, and commended to his friendship the Captain and soldiers who remained in garrison at the village of Hirrihigua. The Cacique promised to observe the strictest amity towards them. He then took leave of De Soto, his principal officers and cavaliers, with many embraces and tears, praying that the sun might shine upon them throughout their journey, and prosper them in all their undertakings. The Spaniards, were greatly affected at parting with this amiable savage, who had in all things proved himself so disinterested a friend.

On arriving at the village of Urribarracaxi, De Soto found Baltazar de Gallegos waiting to receive him. The Cacique, however, still remained in the fastnesses of the forest, and though the Governor sent envoys with offers of peace and friendship, nothing could draw him from his place of refuge.

A grand obstacle now lay in the way by which the Spaniards were to proceed. About three leagues from the village extended a great morass, a league in width, two thirds mire and one third water, and very deep at the borders. Runners were dispatched in three different directions to discover a pass, which they succeeded in doing after several days' search. By this pass the army crossed with ease, although it took a whole day to do so.

They now arrived on a broad plain, and sent runners before them to explore the route. The latter returned next day, declaring that they could not proceed on account of the numerous bogs caused by streams flowing from the great morass and inundating the country. Upon hearing this, the Governor determined to seek a road himself. Choosing, therefore, a hundred horse and as many foot soldiers, he left the rest of the army where they were, under the temporary command of Luis de Moscoso, and re-crossing the great swamp, travelled three days along one side of it, sending runners at different intervals, to seek for some outlet.

During these three days, the Indians incessantly sallied from the woods which skirted the swamp, discharged their arrows at the Spaniards and retreated to their thickets. Some of the savages, however, were killed and others taken prisoners. The latter were used as guides, but they led the troops

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into difficult passes, and places where their countrymen were lurking in ambush. Discovering their perfidy, the Spaniards let loose their dogs, which killed four of them. Fearing a similar fate, an Indian offered to guide them in safety, and accordingly, after a wide circuit, brought them to a place free from mud, but where they had to proceed breast high in water for the distance of a league. Reaching the middle of the channel, they found it too deep to be forded. Here the natives had constructed a rude bridge, by felling two large trees into the water; and, where these did not unite, the space was supplied by logs united by means of transverse poles. By this bridge Pamphilo de Narvaez and his unfortunate army had passed ten years before.

Hernando de Soto, summoning two soldiers, named Pedro Moron and Diego de Oliva, half-breeds of the Island of Cuba, who were expert swimmers, ordered them to take hatchets and cut away several branches which obstructed the passage of the bridge, and remove all other impediments.

Moron and De Oliva set to work with all diligence, but in the midst of their labour, several canoes appeared from among the rushes filled with savages, who galled the workmen with a flight of arrows. The two soldiers plunged headlong from the bridge, swam under water and came up near their comrades. They were but slightly wounded, for being under the surface of the stream, the force of the arrows was broken and they did not penetrate deeply. After this sudden onset, the Indians retired. The Spaniards repaired the bridge without being again molested, and a short distance above, discovered a good ford for the horses.

Having thus succeeded in the object of his search, the Governor summoned Gonzalo Silvestre, one of the most hardy and spirited of his youthful cavaliers, and the best mounted of his troop. "To your lot," said he, "has fallen the best horse in the army, you will in consequence have the more work to do, as I shall assign to you the most difficult tasks that may occur. It is important to the preservation of our lives and to the success of our enterprise, that you return this night to the camp. Desire Luis de Moscoso to follow us with the whole army, and immediately dispatch you with provisions, to sustain us until we can procure food; for you well know that our need is great. In order that your return

may be rendered the more safe, desire him to give you thirty lances as an escort. I will wait for you at this place until to-morrow night ; return, therefore, without delay. The road may seem long and difficult, and the time short, but I know to whom I entrust the undertaking. If you desire a companion, select whom you please, and depart at once, for you should be at the camp before day-break ; because if the day dawn before you have passed the swamp, the Indians may capture and kill you."

The very peril of the mission put the youthful Silvestre upon his metal. Without answering a word he left the Governor, vaulted into his saddle, and was already on the way when he encountered one Juan Lopez Cacho, a native of Seville, and page of the Governor, who had an excellent horse. Silvestre immediately addressing him, said gaily—"The General has ordered that you and I deliver a message at the camp before day-break ; follow me, therefore, immediately, for I am already on the road."

"Take some other person, I entreat you," said Lopez ; "I am fatigued, and cannot undertake the journey."

"As you please," replied Silvestre, "his Excellency ordered me to choose a companion, and I have selected you. If you are so disposed, come ; if not, remain. Your company will not diminish the danger, nor will my going alone increase the toil." So saying he put spurs to his horse and continued on his way. Juan Lopez, though much against his will, leaped into his saddle and galloped after him.

CHAPTER XI.

1539. THE sun was just setting as Gonzalo Silvestre and his comrade, Juan Lopez, departed on their hazardous mission. These youthful cavaliers were well matched in spirit, hardihood, and valour. Neither of them had yet attained his twenty-first year.

They galloped rapidly over the first four or five leagues, the road being free from forests, swamps, or streams. In all that distance they did not perceive a single Indian. No sooner, however, had they crossed this open tract, than their difficulties and dangers began. Being ignorant of the coun-

try, they were obliged to trace back, step by step, the track they had pursued three days previously, through bog and brake, brambles and forests, and across a labyrinth of streams flowing from the great morass; guiding themselves by the landmarks they had noticed on their previous march. In this toilsome journey they were aided by the instinct of their horses. These sagacious animals traced the road by which they had come, keeping their noses just above the ground in order to discover the track, like spaniels or setter dogs, upon the scent of game. Their riders, not understanding this unusual action, checked them with the reins to raise their heads. If at any time the horses lost the track, the moment they recovered it, they puffed and snorted, which alarmed their masters, who dreaded being overheard by the savages.*

Gonzalo Silvestre, comprehending at length the intention of his horse when it lowered its head, gave it the rein, without attempting to guide it. Encountering these and many other difficulties, the two daring youths travelled all night, half dead with hunger, worn out with excessive fatigue, and almost overcome by sleep. Their horses were in no better plight, as they had not been unsaddled for three days, the bits being merely taken from their mouths occasionally, in order that they might graze.

At times they passed within sight of large fires, round which savages were seen stretched in wild and fantastic groups, some capering and singing,—making the silent forests ring with their hideous yells. These Indians were probably celebrating one of their festivals with war-dances. The deafening din which they raised was the safeguard of the Spaniards, as it prevented the savages from hearing the bark-

* The Inca is curiously minute in his account of these horses. "The steed of Gonzalo Silvestre," says he, "was the most sure in the track, and certain to discover it when lost. However," he adds, "we must not be surprised at this excellent quality, and many others which this horse possessed; for, his marks and colour proved him admirably fitted either for peace or war. He was a dark chesnut of a pitchy shade, with white on one of his left feet, and striped above the nostrils;—marks which promise more excellence and gentleness than any other. The dark chesnut colour, especially when of a pitchy hue, is above all others the most excellent, either for light or heavy labour. The steed of Juan Lopez Cachero was of a light bay, commonly called fox colour, and his extremities were black, excellent marks, but inferior to the dark chesnut colour."—Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. L. 2. c. 14.

ing of their dogs, and the trampling of their horses as they passed.*

Thus they journeyed for more than ten leagues. Juan Lopez was repeatedly so much overpowered by sleep, that he proposed they should halt, and take some repose, but Silvestre resolutely refused. At length poor Lopez could contain himself no longer. "Let me sleep for a short time," said he, "or kill me with your lance on the spot, for I cannot possibly keep my saddle."

"Dismount then, and sleep, if you please," said Silvestre, "since you had rather run the risk of being butchered, than bear up an hour longer. According to the distance we have travelled, we cannot be far from the pass of the swamp which we must cross before dawn; for, if the light discovers us in this place, our death is certain."

Juan Lopez made no reply, but fell upon the ground like a lifeless body. His companion took from him his lance, and held his horse by the bridle. Night now rapidly drew on—the clouds discharged a deluge of rain, but nothing could awaken Juan Lopez from his death-like slumber.

As the rain ceased, the clouds dispersed, and Silvestre found that the day had dawned. As this was an unexpected discovery, it is probable that he had been unconsciously sleeping in his saddle. Startled at beholding the light, he hastened to call Lopez, but finding that the low tones in which he spoke, were insufficient to rouse him, he made use of his lance, and gave him some hearty blows, calling out, "Look what your sleeping has brought upon us; daylight has overtaken us, and left us little chance of escape from our enemies!"

Juan Lopez, awakened at last by this summary process, sprang into his saddle, and they set off at a hand-gallop. Fortunately for them, the horses were of such bottom, that, notwithstanding past fatigue, they were still in good spirits. The light revealed the two cavaliers to their foes, who began to yell and howl from every part of the morass. This was accompanied with a frightful din, caused by the mingled clangour of drums, trumpets, conches, and other rude instruments of warlike music.

A perilous league remained to be travelled over an expanse

* The Inca, P. 1. L. 2. c. 14.

of water, which the horses would have to ford. Before the Spaniards reached it, they beheld canoes darting from thickets and cane-brakes, until the water seemed covered with them. They saw the imminent danger that awaited them in the water, after having escaped so many perils on land; but, knowing that their safety depended wholly upon their courage, they dashed boldly into the stream; seeking to cross it with all speed. During their adventurous passage the Indians discharged clouds of arrows at them. Fortunately they were cased in armour, and their horses nearly covered with water, so that they both escaped without wounds, though they declared that, on reaching land, and looking back, the whole surface of the stream appeared to be strewn with arrows.

The savages continued to pursue them on land, plying their bows, and discharging flights of arrows after them, when suddenly a body of thirty horsemen came galloping to their rescue, headed by the gallant Nuño Tobar, on his dapple grey charger. The wild cries and yells of the Indians having reached the army, had caused a surmise that some of their companions were in danger, and Nuño Tobar had immediately proposed this sally to their rescue; for that generous cavalier, now that he was out of favour with his general, with the pride of a noble spirit, seemed to pique himself the more on signalizing himself by worthy deeds.

At sight of Nuño Tobar, and his band, the Indians gave over the pursuit; and fearing to be trampled down by the horses, fled to the thickets and morass for safety.

CHAPTER XII.

1539. THE two adventurous troopers reached the army in safety, and were received with acclamations by their comrades. On learning their errand, Luis de Moscoso, the Camp-Master-General, immediately ordered two horses to be laden with supplies for the Governor and his troops, and thirty horsemen to accompany them as an escort. With this band Gonzalo Silvestre set out on his return, without having reposed an hour in the camp, or taken scarcely any refreshment. His friend, Juan Lopez, however, remained behind, excusing himself under the plea that the Governor had neither ordered him to go nor return.

The thirty horsemen passed the morass without opposition from the Indians, and travelled all day without seeing an enemy. With all their speed, however, they could not reach the place at which the Governor had promised to wait for them, until two hours after night-fall, when, to their great vexation, they found the late encamping ground deserted. Ignorant of the route taken by the General, this little band made arrangements for passing the night upon the spot where their comrades had lately encamped. Being exposed to the attacks of hordes of lurking savages, constant vigilance was necessary. They divided their party, therefore, into three bands of ten men each. One of these detachments, mounted and armed for action, went the rounds the first third of the night; another kept watch at the encampment, with their horses at hand, saddled, bridled, and ready to be mounted; the third merely took the bridles off their steeds, and, suffering the saddles to remain on, turned the horses loose to graze while they snatched a brief repose. In this manner they lightened their toils, going the rounds, watching and sleeping by turns, and the night passed without molestation from any enemy.

As soon as day dawned they sought the tract of the General and his troop, and following it, came to the second pass of the morass where they found the Indian bridge. Here, having to advance a considerable distance, breast high in water, they thought themselves in imminent peril from the Indians, who might hover about them in their canoes and assail them with flights of arrows; but to their great joy they accomplished the whole passage without sustaining any assault. This capricious conduct of the savages, one day attacking with blood-thirsty fury, and the next keeping entirely out of sight, occurred repeatedly throughout the whole of this expedition, and has been sometimes attributed to superstitious notions, such as the observance of lucky and unlucky days in their warfare.

Having travelled six leagues, the convoy came to a beautiful valley, in which were large fields of Indian corn, of such luxuriant growth as to bear three or four ears upon a stalk. The horsemen leaned down and plucked them as they rode along, eating them raw to appease their hunger. In this valley they found the Governor encamped, who received them

joyfully, lavishing praises upon Silvestre for his courage and hardihood, and promising to reward him for his services. He excused himself for not having waited at the appointed place, alleging the intolerable hunger of his troops, and their doubts whether Silvestre had not fallen into the hands of their enemies.

Within a few days, the Governor was joined by the remainder of the army, conducted by Luis de Moscoso. They had traversed the two passes of the morass with great toil and difficulty, but fortunately without experiencing any hostility from the natives.

The fertile province in which the army was now encamped, lay twenty leagues to the north of that governed by Urribarracaxi, and was governed by a Cacique named Acuera, who, on the approach of the Spaniards, had fled with his people to the woods. Hernando de Soto sent Indian interpreters to this chief, representing the power of the Spaniards to do injury in war, and confer benefits in peace; declaring his disposition to befriend the natives, his only object being, by amicable means, to bring the people of this great country into obedience to his Sovereign, the powerful Emperor and King of Castile. He invited the Cacique, therefore, to a friendly interview in order to arrange a peaceful intercourse.

The Cacique returned a haughty reply. "Others of your accursed race," said he, "have in years past disturbed our peaceful shores. They have taught me what you are. What is your employment? To wander about like vagabonds from land to land—to rob the poor—to betray the confiding—to murder the defenceless in cold blood. No! with such a people I want neither peace nor friendship. War—never ending—exterminating war, is all I ask. You boast yourselves to be valiant—and so you may be—but my faithful warriors are not less brave—and of this you shall one day have proof, for I have sworn to maintain an unsparing conflict while one white man remains in my borders;—not openly in the battle field—though even thus we fear not to meet you—but by stratagem, ambush, and midnight surprisal."

In reply to the demand that he should yield obedience to the Emperor, the Chief replied: "I am king in my own land, and will never become the vassal of a mortal like myself. Vile and pusillanimous is he who submits to the yoke

of another, when he may be free! As for me and my people, we prefer death to the loss of liberty, and the subjugation of our country!"

The Governor, filled with admiration at the spirit of this savage chieftain, was more pressing than ever to gain his friendship; but to all his overtures the Cacique's answer was, that he had already made the only reply he had to offer.

The army remained in this province twenty days, recruiting from the fatigues and privations of their past journey. During this time, the Governor sent persons in every direction to explore the country, and they returned with favourable reports.

During this time the Indians were not idle. To justify the bravadoes of their Cacique, they lurked in ambush about the camp, so that a Spaniard could not stray a hundred steps from it without being shot and instantly beheaded; if his companions hastened to his rescue, they found nothing but a headless trunk.

The Christians buried the bodies of their unfortunate comrades wherever they found them; but the savages invariably returned the following night, disinterred them, cut them up and hanged them upon trees. The heads they carried as trophies to their Cacique, according to his orders. Thus fourteen Spaniards perished, and a greater number were wounded. In these skirmishes, the Indians ran comparatively little risk, as the Spanish encampment was skirted by a thicket, whither, after making an assault, the assailants could easily escape. In this manner the Spaniards saw effectually verified the threats of their ferocious foes, who had hung upon their rear during the march. "Keep on, robbers and traitors," they cried, "in Acuera and Apalachee we will treat you as you deserve. We will quarter and hang up every captive on the highest trees along the road."

Notwithstanding their great vigilance, the Spaniards did not kill more than fifty Indians, for the latter were extremely wary in their ambuscades.*

1539. The army reposed twenty days in the province of Acuera, during which period De Soto permitted no injury to be done either to the hamlets, villages, or fields of grain: he then broke up his encampment, and set out in search of

* The Inca, P. 1. L. 2. c. 16. Herrera, D. 6. L. 7. c. 13.

of their journey, they observed many trees similar to those of Spain, such as walnut, oak, mulberry, plum, pine, and evergreen oak. There were wild grapes also in abundance.

The distance from the village of Mucozo, to that of his brother-in-law was about seventeen leagues. The adventurers arrived there in four days, but found it deserted, the inhabitants having fled to the woods. Gallegos sent his envoy repeatedly to the Cacique, with the most friendly messages, but every effort to draw him from his retreat proved fruitless, though he manifested no hostility either by word or deed. The Spanish leader made diligent inquiry of the Indians he met with, if there was any province where gold and silver might be found. They replied that there was a country to the westward called Ocali, the inhabitants of which were continually at war with the people of another province, where the spring lasted all the year long, and gold was so plenty that their warriors wore head-pieces of that precious metal.*

1539. After Hernando de Soto had despatched Gallegos to explore the country, he received intelligence that the Cacique Hirrihigua was concealed in a forest at no great distance from the camp. The Governor was about to send a captain with an armed force in quest of him, when the enterprise was claimed by Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa. This brave old cavalier had a passion for military exploits, and was withal a little vain-glorious. He thought this a fit opportunity to signalize himself, and insisted upon having the honour of capturing the formidable though fugitive Cacique. His desire being acceded to, he prepared for it in his usual way, being fond of parade, and liberal in all his appointments. Having selected a band of horsemen and foot soldiers, he put himself at their head and sallied from the camp, well mounted, and cased in glittering armour, boasting that he would bring home Hirrihigua either a prisoner or a friend.†

He had not proceeded far, however, when he was met by an Indian messenger, sent by Hirrihigua, who had received intelligence from his spies of the armed force marching in

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 10.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1, L. 2, c. 9. Herrera, Hist. Ind. Decad. 6, L. 7. c. 10.

quest of him. This messenger entreated Vasco Porcallo on the part of Hirrihigua, not to proceed further, as the Cacique was in so secure a fortress that, with all his exertions, the Spanish leader would be unable to obtain an entrance: but that both he and his troops would be exposed to infinite perils from the rivers, morasses and tangled forests, which they would have to pass. The Cacique added, that he gave this advice, not through any fear for himself, but in consequence of the forbearance manifested by the Spaniards, in not injuring his territory, or his subjects.

Vasco Porcallo listened to the messenger with incredulity; persuading himself that fear, not gratitude nor courtesy, dictated the message: he therefore ordered the trumpet to sound, and marched on. As he advanced, messenger after messenger met him, all repeating the warning to return, and at length these became so numerous as almost to overtake each other. The more, however, he was warned to return, the more obstinately did the stout-hearted, but hot-headed old soldier persist in advancing: taking every thing by contraries, and judging of the Cacique's panic, by the frequency of his messages. His only fear was that the prize might escape him. Under this impression, he spurred on hotly with his troops, until they arrived at a vast and dangerous morass.

Here his men perceived the truth of the warnings they had received, and began to remonstrate upon the danger of attempting the morass. Vasco Porcallo, however, had put himself too much on his mettle in this enterprise to be easily daunted. He insisted upon their entering; but, knowing from experience the effect of setting an example in time of difficulty, he put spurs to his horse, dashed forward, and his men followed him pell mell into the morass. Vasco Porcallo had not proceeded far, however, when, coming to a deep part of the swamp, his horse floundered and fell. The peril of the Lieutenant-General was imminent; his horse had fallen upon one of its rider's legs so as to fix him down, while the weight of his armour contributed to sink him into the mire. Both horse and rider were in danger of suffocation, nor could any one afford them relief, as all who entered would be exposed to similar peril.

At length the cavalier having, with infinite difficulty,

extricated himself and steed from the bog, stood once more on firm ground, covered with mud. All his vain glory was at an end, he was out of humour with himself, and felt humbled in the sight of his soldiers. The savage whom he had come to fight and capture, instead of encountering him with deadly weapons, had conquered him by courteous and friendly messages, and his vain-glorious enterprize had ended in a struggle in a quagmire.

Ordering his men to face about, he set out on his return to the camp, in a far different mood from that in which he had sallied forth. Amidst the mortifications of his present plight, he called to mind the comfortable home he had left behind, at Cuba, and the easy life he had led there. He reflected that he was no longer a boy; that the vigour of his days was past; that his present disaster was but a slight foretaste of the toils and troubles which must attend this expedition of conquest; and came at length to the conclusion, that as he was not obliged to encounter them, he had better return home, and leave the conquest of Florida to the younger adventurers who were embarked in it.

Revolving these and similar thoughts in his mind, the worthy old cavalier, all bedabbled, bemired, and totally crest-fallen, rode along in querulous, yet half-whimsical humour, muttering to himself.

Vasco Porcallo arrived at the camp in a state of moody dissatisfaction. All his dreams of conquest were at an end. The martial fire which he had caught from the young soldiers of the army, and which had blazed up so suddenly in his bosom, had been as suddenly extinguished. He only thought now, how to get rid of his command of Lieutenant-General; and return to his comfortable home in Cuba. With these views he presented himself at once before De Soto, and stating his reasons with honest force and hearty sincerity, applied for permission to resign. The Governor granted it with the same promptness with which he had accepted his offer to join the enterprise, and moreover, furnished him with the galliot San Anton to convey him back to the island.

The worthy veteran was now as eager to abandon the expedition as he had been to join it. His train of servants, Spanish, Indian, and negro, were embarked with all speed;

but when the gallant old cavalier came to take leave of his young companions in arms, and the soldiers he had lately aspired to lead so vain-gloriously, his generous spirit displayed itself. He divided among the officers and knights all the arms, accoutrements, horses, and camp equipage with which he had come so ostentatiously provided; and he gave for the use of the expedition all the stores which he had purchased for himself and his retinue. He then set sail for Cuba, much to the regret of the army, who lamented that so gallant a cavalier was about to be withdrawn from their confederation.

The only person who remained behind of Vasco Porcallo's retinue was Gomez Suarez de Figueroa, his natural son, by an Indian woman in Cuba, with whom he left two horses, arms, and other necessaries. Throughout this expedition this youth conducted himself as a good knight and soldier, and a worthy son of such a father, serving with great promptitude upon all occasions.*

CHAPTER X.

1539. ON the day after the departure of Vasco Porcallo, a young cavalier named Gonzalo Silvestre, followed by three other horsemen, rode into the camp, bearing dispatches from Baltazar de Gallegos. They brought favourable accounts of the country he had explored, with assurances that, in the village of Urribarracaxi and its neighbourhood, there were provisions enough to sustain the army for several days.

There was but one drawback on this favourable intelligence, which was, that beyond the town of Urribarracaxi there extended a vast swamp, exceedingly difficult to be traversed. The Spaniards, however, ripe for action and adventure, made light of this obstacle, averring that God had provided man with genius and dexterity to make his way through every difficulty.

Satisfied from the dispatches just received, that he might readily penetrate into the interior, the Governor issued orders for every one to prepare for marching on the fourth day. In the mean time he commanded Gonzalo Silvestre to return to

* The Inca. P. I. L. 2, c. 11.

Baltazar de Gallegos with twenty horsemen, and inform him that the army would join him without further delay.

As there was a great quantity of arms, ammunition, and provisions in the village of Hirrihigua, a garrison of forty horsemen and eighty foot soldiers was left there, under the command of Pedro Calderon, who had charge also of the shipping in the harbour, consisting of a caravel and two brigantines with their crews.

They were enjoined to remain quiet, and not move to any other place without orders from De Soto; to cultivate peace with the neighbouring Indians, and not make war upon them even though they should be taunted and insulted;—above all, to treat Mucozo with marked friendship.

Having made these arrangements, and trusting, as well he might, in Pedro Calderon as a good soldier and discreet Captain, on the appointed day, De Soto set out with his main force, from the village of Hirrihigua. It was an arduous task to conduct such a body of troops, encumbered with armour and all kinds of baggage and supplies, through a wilderness, exposed to constant hardships, unforeseen dangers, and a wild kind of warfare, to which most of his soldiers were entirely unaccustomed.

As it was a leading object with the Governor, to found a colony, he was encumbered with many things that embarrassed the march of his army. Among these were three hundred swine, with which he intended to stock the country should he succeed in forming a settlement, having found them the most advantageous stock for the subsistence of new colonies. These animals were placed in charge of a company of horse, to keep them in the line of march, and guard them while traversing the swamps and rivers.

Besides the match-locks and cross-bows with which the infantry were armed, there was one piece of ordnance in the army, that must have cost them vast labour to transport, though it appears never to have rendered any efficient service.

After two days' march, to the north-east, on the morning of the third day De Soto came in sight of the village of Mucozo. The Cacique came forth to receive him, expressing great grief at his intended departure from the country, and entreating him to remain that night in his village. The Governor, however, excused himself, not wishing to task the

hospitality of this generous Indian with such a multitude of guests, but again expressed his thanks for the kindness shown by the Cacique to Juan Ortiz, and commended to his friendship the Captain and soldiers who remained in garrison at the village of Hirrihigua. The Cacique promised to observe the strictest amity towards them. He then took leave of De Soto, his principal officers and cavaliers, with many embraces and tears, praying that the sun might shine upon them throughout their journey, and prosper them in all their undertakings. The Spaniards, were greatly affected at parting with this amiable savage, who had in all things proved himself so disinterested a friend.

On arriving at the village of Urribarracaxi, De Soto found Baltazar de Gallegos waiting to receive him. The Cacique, however, still remained in the fastnesses of the forest, and though the Governor sent envoys with offers of peace and friendship, nothing could draw him from his place of refuge.

A grand obstacle now lay in the way by which the Spaniards were to proceed. About three leagues from the village extended a great morass, a league in width, two thirds mire and one third water, and very deep at the borders. Runners were dispatched in three different directions to discover a pass, which they succeeded in doing after several days' search. By this pass the army crossed with ease, although it took a whole day to do so.

They now arrived on a broad plain, and sent runners before them to explore the route. The latter returned next day, declaring that they could not proceed on account of the numerous bogs caused by streams flowing from the great morass and inundating the country. Upon hearing this, the Governor determined to seek a road himself. Choosing, therefore, a hundred horse and as many foot soldiers, he left the rest of the army where they were, under the temporary command of Luis de Moscoso, and re-crossing the great swamp, travelled three days along one side of it, sending runners at different intervals, to seek for some outlet.

During these three days, the Indians incessantly sallied from the woods which skirted the swamp, discharged their arrows at the Spaniards and retreated to their thickets. Some of the savages, however, were killed and others taken prisoners. The latter were used as guides, but they led the troops

into difficult passes, and places where their countrymen were lurking in ambush. Discovering their perfidy, the Spaniards let loose their dogs, which killed four of them. Fearing a similar fate, an Indian offered to guide them in safety, and accordingly, after a wide circuit, brought them to a place free from mud, but where they had to proceed breast high in water for the distance of a league. Reaching the middle of the channel, they found it too deep to be forded. Here the natives had constructed a rude bridge, by felling two large trees into the water; and, where these did not unite, the space was supplied by logs united by means of transverse poles. By this bridge Pamphilo de Narvaez and his unfortunate army had passed ten years before.

Hernando de Soto, summoning two soldiers, named Pedro Moron and Diego de Oliva, half-breeds of the Island of Cuba, who were expert swimmers, ordered them to take hatchets and cut away several branches which obstructed the passage of the bridge, and remove all other impediments.

Moron and De Oliva set to work with all diligence, but in the midst of their labour, several canoes appeared from among the rushes filled with savages, who galled the workmen with a flight of arrows. The two soldiers plunged headlong from the bridge, swam under water and came up near their comrades. They were but slightly wounded, for being under the surface of the stream, the force of the arrows was broken and they did not penetrate deeply. After this sudden onset, the Indians retired. The Spaniards repaired the bridge without being again molested, and a short distance above, discovered a good ford for the horses.

Having thus succeeded in the object of his search, the Governor summoned Gonzalo Silvestre, one of the most hardy and spirited of his youthful cavaliers, and the best mounted of his troop. "To your lot," said he, "has fallen the best horse in the army, you will in consequence have the more work to do, as I shall assign to you the most difficult tasks that may occur. It is important to the preservation of our lives and to the success of our enterprise, that you return this night to the camp. Desire Luis de Moscoso to follow us with the whole army, and immediately dispatch you with provisions, to sustain us until we can procure food; for you well know that our need is great. In order that your return

may be rendered the more safe, desire him to give you thirty lances as an escort. I will wait for you at this place until to-morrow night ; return, therefore, without delay. The road may seem long and difficult, and the time short, but I know to whom I entrust the undertaking. If you desire a companion, select whom you please, and depart at once, for you should be at the camp before day-break ; because if the day dawn before you have passed the swamp, the Indians may capture and kill you."

The very peril of the mission put the youthful Silvestre upon his metal. Without answering a word he left the Governor, vaulted into his saddle, and was already on the way when he encountered one Juan Lopez Cacho, a native of Seville, and page of the Governor, who had an excellent horse. Silvestre immediately addressing him, said gaily—"The General has ordered that you and I deliver a message at the camp before day-break ; follow me, therefore, immediately, for I am already on the road."

"Take some other person, I entreat you," said Lopez ; "I am fatigued, and cannot undertake the journey."

"As you please," replied Silvestre, "his Excellency ordered me to choose a companion, and I have selected you. If you are so disposed, come ; if not, remain. Your company will not diminish the danger, nor will my going alone increase the toil." So saying he put spurs to his horse and continued on his way. Juan Lopez, though much against his will, leaped into his saddle and galloped after him.

CHAPTER XI.

1539. THE sun was just setting as Gonzalo Silvestre and his comrade, Juan Lopez, departed on their hazardous mission. These youthful cavaliers were well matched in spirit, hardihood, and valour. Neither of them had yet attained his twenty-first year.

They galloped rapidly over the first four or five leagues, the road being free from forests, swamps, or streams. In all that distance they did not perceive a single Indian. No sooner, however, had they crossed this open tract, than their difficulties and dangers began. Being ignorant of the coun-

try, they were obliged to trace back, step by step, the track they had pursued three days previously, through bog and brake, brambles and forests, and across a labyrinth of streams flowing from the great morass; guiding themselves by the landmarks they had noticed on their previous march. In this toilsome journey they were aided by the instinct of their horses. These sagacious animals traced the road by which they had come, keeping their noses just above the ground in order to discover the track, like spaniels or setter dogs, upon the scent of game. Their riders, not understanding this unusual action, checked them with the reins to raise their heads. If at any time the horses lost the track, the moment they recovered it, they puffed and snorted, which alarmed their masters, who dreaded being overheard by the savages.*

Gonzalo Silvestre, comprehending at length the intention of his horse when it lowered its head, gave it the rein, without attempting to guide it. Encountering these and many other difficulties, the two daring youths travelled all night, half dead with hunger, worn out with excessive fatigue, and almost overcome by sleep. Their horses were in no better plight, as they had not been unsaddled for three days, the bits being merely taken from their mouths occasionally, in order that they might graze.

At times they passed within sight of large fires, round which savages were seen stretched in wild and fantastic groups, some capering and singing,—making the silent forests ring with their hideous yells. These Indians were probably celebrating one of their festivals with war-dances. The deafening din which they raised was the safeguard of the Spaniards, as it prevented the savages from hearing the bark-

* The Inca is curiously minute in his account of these horses. "The steed of Gonzalo Silvestre," says he, "was the most sure in the track, and certain to discover it when lost. However," he adds, "we must not be surprised at this excellent quality, and many others which this horse possessed; for, his marks and colour proved him admirably fitted either for peace or war. He was a dark chesnut of a pitchy shade, with white on one of his left feet, and striped above the nostrils;—marks which promise more excellence and gentleness than any other. The dark chesnut colour, especially when of a pitchy hue, is above all others the most excellent, either for light or heavy labour. The steed of Juan Lopez Cachero was of a light bay, commonly called fox colour, and his extremities were black, excellent marks, but inferior to the dark chesnut colour."—Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. L. 2. c. 14.

ing of their dogs, and the trampling of their horses as they passed.*

Thus they journeyed for more than ten leagues. Juan Lopez was repeatedly so much overpowered by sleep, that he proposed they should halt, and take some repose, but Silvestre resolutely refused. At length poor Lopez could contain himself no longer. "Let me sleep for a short time," said he, "or kill me with your lance on the spot, for I cannot possibly keep my saddle."

"Dismount then, and sleep, if you please," said Silvestre, "since you had rather run the risk of being butchered, than bear up an hour longer. According to the distance we have travelled, we cannot be far from the pass of the swamp which we must cross before dawn; for, if the light discovers us in this place, our death is certain."

Juan Lopez made no reply, but fell upon the ground like a lifeless body. His companion took from him his lance, and held his horse by the bridle. Night now rapidly drew on—the clouds discharged a deluge of rain, but nothing could awaken Juan Lopez from his death-like slumber.

As the rain ceased, the clouds dispersed, and Silvestre found that the day had dawned. As this was an unexpected discovery, it is probable that he had been unconsciously sleeping in his saddle. Startled at beholding the light, he hastened to call Lopez, but finding that the low tones in which he spoke, were insufficient to rouse him, he made use of his lance, and gave him some hearty blows, calling out, "Look what your sleeping has brought upon us; daylight has overtaken us, and left us little chance of escape from our enemies!"

Juan Lopez, awakened at last by this summary process, sprang into his saddle, and they set off at a hand-gallop. Fortunately for them, the horses were of such bottom, that, notwithstanding past fatigue, they were still in good spirits. The light revealed the two cavaliers to their foes, who began to yell and howl from every part of the morass. This was accompanied with a frightful din, caused by the mingled clangour of drums, trumpets, conches, and other rude instruments of warlike music.

A perilous league remained to be travelled over an expanse

* The Inca, P. 1. L. 2. c. 14.

of water, which the horses would have to ford. Before the Spaniards reached it, they beheld canoes darting from thickets and cane-brakes, until the water seemed covered with them. They saw the imminent danger that awaited them in the water, after having escaped so many perils on land; but, knowing that their safety depended wholly upon their courage, they dashed boldly into the stream; seeking to cross it with all speed. During their adventurous passage the Indians discharged clouds of arrows at them. Fortunately they were cased in armour, and their horses nearly covered with water, so that they both escaped without wounds, though they declared that, on reaching land, and looking back, the whole surface of the stream appeared to be strewn with arrows.

The savages continued to pursue them on land, plying their bows, and discharging flights of arrows after them, when suddenly a body of thirty horsemen came galloping to their rescue, headed by the gallant Nuño Tobar, on his dapple grey charger. The wild cries and yells of the Indians having reached the army, had caused a surmise that some of their companions were in danger, and Nuño Tobar had immediately proposed this sally to their rescue; for that generous cavalier, now that he was out of favour with his general, with the pride of a noble spirit, seemed to pique himself the more on signalizing himself by worthy deeds.

At sight of Nuño Tobar, and his band, the Indians gave over the pursuit; and fearing to be trampled down by the horses, fled to the thickets and morass for safety.

CHAPTER XII.

1539. THE two adventurous troopers reached the army in safety, and were received with acclamations by their comrades. On learning their errand, Luis de Moscoso, the Camp-Master-General, immediately ordered two horses to be laden with supplies for the Governor and his troops, and thirty horsemen to accompany them as an escort. With this band Gonzalo Silvestre set out on his return, without having reposed an hour in the camp, or taken scarcely any refreshment. His friend, Juan Lopez, however, remained behind, excusing himself under the plea that the Governor had neither ordered him to go nor return.

The thirty horsemen passed the morass without opposition from the Indians, and travelled all day without seeing an enemy. With all their speed, however, they could not reach the place at which the Governor had promised to wait for them, until two hours after night-fall, when, to their great vexation, they found the late encamping ground deserted. Ignorant of the route taken by the General, this little band made arrangements for passing the night upon the spot where their comrades had lately encamped. Being exposed to the attacks of hordes of lurking savages, constant vigilance was necessary. They divided their party, therefore, into three bands of ten men each. One of these detachments, mounted and armed for action, went the rounds the first third of the night; another kept watch at the encampment, with their horses at hand, saddled, bridled, and ready to be mounted; the third merely took the bridles off their steeds, and, suffering the saddles to remain on, turned the horses loose to graze while they snatched a brief repose. In this manner they lightened their toils, going the rounds, watching and sleeping by turns, and the night passed without molestation from any enemy.

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Having travelled six leagues, the convoy came to a beautiful valley, in which were large fields of Indian corn, of such luxuriant growth as to bear three or four ears upon a stalk. The horsemen leaned down and plucked them as they rode along, eating them raw to appease their hunger. In this valley they found the Governor encamped, who received them

joyfully, lavishing praises upon Silvestre for his courage and hardihood, and promising to reward him for his services. He excused himself for not having waited at the appointed place, alleging the intolerable hunger of his troops, and their doubts whether Silvestre had not fallen into the hands of their enemies.

Within a few days, the Governor was joined by the remainder of the army, conducted by Luis de Moscoso. They had traversed the two passes of the morass with great toil and difficulty, but fortunately without experiencing any hostility from the natives.

The fertile province in which the army was now encamped, lay twenty leagues to the north of that governed by Urribaracaxi, and was governed by a Cacique named Acuera, who, on the approach of the Spaniards, had fled with his people to the woods. Hernando de Soto sent Indian interpreters to this chief, representing the power of the Spaniards to do injury in war, and confer benefits in peace; declaring his disposition to befriend the natives, his only object being, by amicable means, to bring the people of this great country into obedience to his Sovereign, the powerful Emperor and King of Castile. He invited the Cacique, therefore, to a friendly interview in order to arrange a peaceful intercourse.

The Cacique returned a haughty reply. "Others of your accursed race," said he, "have in years past disturbed our peaceful shores. They have taught me what you are. What is your employment? To wander about like vagabonds from land to land—to rob the poor—to betray the confiding—to murder the defenceless in cold blood. No! with such a people I want neither peace nor friendship. War—never ending—exterminating war, is all I ask. You boast yourselves to be valiant—and so you may be—but my faithful warriors are not less brave—and of this you shall one day have proof, for I have sworn to maintain an unsparing conflict while one white man remains in my borders;—not openly in the battle field—though even thus we fear not to meet you—but by stratagem, ambush, and midnight surprisal."

In reply to the demand that he should yield obedience to the Emperor, the Chief replied: "I am king in my own land, and will never become the vassal of a mortal like myself. Vile and pusillanimous is he who submits to the yoke

of another, when he may be free! As for me and my people, we prefer death to the loss of liberty, and the subjugation of our country!"

The Governor, filled with admiration at the spirit of this savage chieftain, was more pressing than ever to gain his friendship; but to all his overtures the Cacique's answer was, that he had already made the only reply he had to offer.

The army remained in this province twenty days, recruiting from the fatigues and privations of their past journey. During this time, the Governor sent persons in every direction to explore the country, and they returned with favourable reports.

During this time the Indians were not idle. To justify the bravadoes of their Cacique, they lurked in ambush about the camp, so that a Spaniard could not stray a hundred steps from it without being shot and instantly beheaded; if his companions hastened to his rescue, they found nothing but a headless trunk.

The Christians buried the bodies of their unfortunate comrades wherever they found them; but the savages invariably returned the following night, disinterred them, cut them up and hanged them upon trees. The heads they carried as trophies to their Cacique, according to his orders. Thus fourteen Spaniards perished, and a greater number were wounded. In these skirmishes, the Indians ran comparatively little risk, as the Spanish encampment was skirted by a thicket, whither, after making an assault, the assailants could easily escape. In this manner the Spaniards saw effectually verified the threats of their ferocious foes, who had hung upon their rear during the march. "Keep on, robbers and traitors," they cried, "in Acuera and Apalachee we will treat you as you deserve. We will quarter and hang up every captive on the highest trees along the road."

Notwithstanding their great vigilance, the Spaniards did not kill more than fifty Indians, for the latter were extremely wary in their ambuscades.*

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* The Inca, P. 1. L. 2. c. 16. Herrera, D. 6. L. 7. c. 13.

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another province, about twenty leagues to the north-east, called Ocali,*—the same of which Gallegos had heard at the village of Urribarracaxi. His way lay across a desert tract, about twelve leagues broad, interspersed with open forests of pine and other trees, free from underwood, through which the horsemen could ride at ease. The army then traversed seven leagues of inhabited country, where dwellings were scattered about the fields and woods. At length, they arrived at the principal village, called after the Cacique, Ocali, containing six hundred houses. The inhabitants, however, had abandoned it, and fled with their effects to the forests.

This province, being further from the sea-coast, was less intersected by creeks and bays, which in other parts penetrated deeply into this low and level country, causing vast swamps, difficult, and sometimes impossible to traverse. In some of the morasses, the surface appeared like firm and dry land, but on stepping upon it, it would tremble for twenty or thirty paces around, and on being trodden by horses would give way, and engulf both horse and rider.

Besides being freer from swamps, the province of Ocali was more populous and fruitful than the other districts. This the Spaniards found to be the case throughout the country, in proportion as the provinces were remote from the sea. Their greatest sufferings during this expedition arose from the scarcity of animal food, as the natives did not breed domestic cattle; and, although deer and other game were abundant, the Indians only killed sufficient to supply their own immediate wants.

The Spaniards took up their quarters in the village of Ocali, where they found vast quantities of maize, vegetables, and various kinds of fruits. De Soto sent three or four Indian messengers daily to the Cacique Ocali, endeavouring, in vain, to draw that chieftain from his retreat, with offers of friendship. With one of these messengers, there came to the camp, gaily decorated with plumes, four young Indian warriors, who manifested an eager curiosity to see the Spaniards, their dress, their arms, and above all, their horses. The Governor entertained them kindly, made them presents, and ordered that refreshments should be set before them.

* This name is spelt Cale by the Portuguese narrator.

They sat down and appeared to be eating very quietly, when, perceiving the Spaniards off their guard, they all rose suddenly together, and ran full speed to the woods. It was in vain to attempt a pursuit on foot, and there was no horse at hand.

A greyhound of uncommon sagacity, however, happened to be near; hearing the cry of the savages, and seeing them run, it pursued them. Passing by the first whom it overtook, and likewise the second and third, it sprang upon the shoulders of the foremost and pulled him to the ground; meanwhile, the next Indian passed on, but the dog, quitting the man whom it had seized, leaped upon the other, and secured him in the same way. In like manner it served the third and fourth; and then kept running from one to the other, pulling each down as fast as he rose, and barking so furiously, that the fugitives being terrified and confounded, the Spaniards were enabled to overtake and capture them. They were led back to the camp and examined separately, for as they were armed, the Spaniards apprehended treachery; but it appeared that their sudden flight was only an exploit to show their address and fleetness.

This same greyhound had signalized itself on another occasion, before the army reached Ocali. As several Indians and Spaniards were talking in a friendly way on the bank of a river, one of the former struck a Spaniard violently with his bow, and threw himself into the water, all his companions following him. The dog immediately sprang in after them, but passed by several without molesting them, until it came to the one who had committed the assault, when, laying hold of him, it tore him to pieces.

CHAPTER XIII.

1539. AFTER repeated solicitations, the Cacique Ocali, at the end of six days, ventured from his place of refuge, and visited the camp, where he was treated with great courtesy and kindness, although the Spaniards doubted much the sincerity of his professions.

Close by the village ran a wide and deep river, with precipitous banks. Notwithstanding that it was the summer

season, this river was too full of water to be fordable; it was therefore necessary to construct a wooden bridge, over which the army might pass. De Soto having treated with the Cacique for a number of his subjects to aid in its construction, went to decide upon the spot where it should be erected. As they were walking along the bank of the stream, conferring upon the subject, more than five hundred Indians suddenly started from among the bushes and thickets, on the opposite bank of the river, crying out fiercely, "You want a bridge, do you? merciless robbers! but you will never see it built by our hands!" Thus shouting, they discharged a volley of arrows towards the place where the Cacique and Governor were standing.

De Soto demanded the meaning of this outrage, having received from the Cacique pledges of his friendship. The latter replied, that these were a refractory party of his subjects, who had cast off their allegiance to him on account of his attachment to the Spaniards, and that he was not, therefore, answerable for their acts.

It happened that the greyhound already mentioned was at hand, held in a leash by the Governor's page. No sooner did it hear the yells and see the menacing actions of the Indians, than it was furious to get at them. In its struggles, it threw the page upon the ground, and breaking loose, plunged into the stream. The Spaniards called it back in vain. The savages knowing the injury it had done to their countrymen, were glad of an opportunity to revenge themselves. They showered their arrows about the dog as it swam, and with such dexterous aim, that more than fifty struck it about the head and shoulders, which were above the water. Still the courageous animal kept on, and reached the land, but had scarcely quitted the water when it fell dead. Its death was greatly lamented by the Governor and the whole army: for it had been of signal service throughout the expedition, a vigilant guardian of the camp by night, and an effectual champion by day. It was one of a rare and renowned race of dogs, several of which were noted for their feats in the course of the Spanish discoveries and conquests.

1539. De Soto saw that the chieftain Ocali was but little esteemed by his subjects, who disobeyed his commands with impunity; and, thinking the neighbouring Caciques might

suppose that he was detained against his will, he gave him permission to return to his people, and revisit the camp whenever it might please him. The Cacique gladly availed himself of this offer, but declared he only went in order to bring his subjects into more perfect submission to the Governor, and as soon as he had accomplished this, that he would joyfully rejoin the Spaniards. With these and many similar professions he departed; but never again showed his face in the camp.

Upon the Cacique's departure, the Spaniards commenced constructing a bridge over the river. The work was superintended by one Francisco, a Genoese, the only shipwright in the army. He was likewise skilled in all kinds of joiner's work, and by his art rendered incalculable services to the Spaniards throughout this expedition. Large planks were floated upon the water, and tied together with strong cords, which the Spaniards had brought with them for such emergencies; the planks were then crossed with immense poles laid and fastened on the top. This rude bridge was of sufficient strength for the passage of both men and horses. Having captured thirty Indians to serve as guides, the army passed the river and set forward on their march.

After travelling about three days, the Governor putting himself in advance of the army, with a hundred horse, and the same number of foot, and pushing forward in the night, came by daybreak to the frontiers of a province fifty leagues across, called Vitachuco. It was under the dominion of three brothers. The eldest, Vitachuco, bearing the name of the country over which he ruled, had five parts out of ten, the second brother governed three of the remaining five, and the youngest of the family, who was chief of the village of Ochile, and of the same name, possessed the remainder. This was contrary to the usage of the other provinces through which the Spaniards had passed, the eldest son generally inheriting all.

It was scarcely daybreak on the first day, when De Soto and his advanced corps arrived at the village of Ochile. It contained fifty large and strong habitations, being a frontier post, fortified against incursions from the adjacent provinces, with which it was at war.

De Soto and his little band rushed suddenly into the

village, amid the clamorous sound of drum and trumpet, seized the Indians as, terrified and amazed, they came forth from their houses and surrounded the mansion of the Cacique. This was built in the form of one large pavilion, upwards of a hundred and twenty paces in length, and forty in breadth, having four doors, and a number of smaller buildings connected with it, like offices.

The Cacique had with him a guard of his principal warriors, and many others had hastened to his defence. He would have sallied forth and offered a vigorous resistance, but the Spaniards had possession of the doors, and threatened to fire the house. At length, by sun-rise, through the mediation of Indian prisoners and interpreters, he was persuaded to yield to the superior power of the Spaniards, and accept their offered friendship. De Soto received him kindly, but detained him, setting at liberty all the other prisoners, and ordering his soldiers to treat them in the most friendly manner.

The Governor, however, did not feel himself secure. The neighbourhood was populous; the savages seeing the small number of his band, might gather together, and attempt to rescue their Cacique. Taking that chieftain with him, therefore, and a number of his most faithful warriors, De Soto marched his detachment out of the village, and returned in quest of the main body of his troops. These he found encamped three leagues off, full of anxiety on account of their General's absence.

The day following, the army entered Ochile, in battle array; the foot and horse formed into squadrons, with trumpets, fifes, and drums sounding. The troops being quartered, the Governor prevailed upon Ochile to send envoys to his two brothers, inviting them to accept the Spaniards' offer of peace, and warning them of the disastrous consequences that would attend a refusal.

The second brother, who was nearest, readily embraced the proposal, and at the end of three days came accompanied by many of his warriors gaily decorated. After kissing the Governor's hands, he entered into familiar conversation with the officers and distinguished cavaliers of the army, asking the name of each, and bearing himself with as much ease and natural courtesy as if he had been brought up among them.

The elder brother, however, who was much the most powerful of the three, made no reply to the message, but detained the envoys by whom it had been conveyed. The two brothers, by the persuasion of De Soto, sent other messengers, with still more urgent entreaties. They magnified the power of the Spaniards, whom they represented as children of the sun and moon, and their gods invincible—that they had come from a remote region, where the sun rises in its brightest glory, and that they had with them animals called horses, so fleet, courageous and powerful, that it was impossible either to escape them by flight, or resist them by force.

The answer of Vitachuco is given at length by the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega; though he quotes it from memory, after a lapse of years; and declares that he cannot vouch for its being arranged exactly in the order in which it was delivered, or that it was the whole of what was said; but pledges his word that, as far as it goes, it is truly the reply of the Cacique. He asserts that if it really was delivered as recounted by the envoys, none of the knights whom the divine Ariosto or his predecessor, the illustrious and enamoured Count Mareo Maria Boyardo, have introduced into their works, could have equalled in fiery courage and indomitable spirit, this savage chieftain. Without claiming for it all the praise awarded by that ancient author, still it shows the haughty spirit of this wild warrior, whose gallant efforts were, however, of little avail against the Spanish invader.

1539. “It is evident enough,” observes the Cacique in reply to the embassy of his brothers, “that you are young, and have neither judgment nor experience, or you would never speak as you have done of these hated white men! You extol them greatly as virtuous persons, who injure no one. You say that they are valiant—that they are children of the sun—that they merit all our reverence and service. The vile chains which they have hung upon you—the mean and dastardly spirit which you have acquired during the short period you have been their slaves, have caused you to speak like women, lauding what you should censure and abhor. You remember not, that these Christians can be no better than those who formerly committed so many cruelties in our country. Are they not of the same nation and subject

to the same laws? Does not their manner of life prove them to be children of the Spirit of Evil, and not of the sun and moon, our gods? Go they not from land to land plundering and destroying; taking the wives and daughters of the peaceable inhabitants, instead of bringing their own with them; and, like mere vagabonds, maintaining themselves by the laborious toil of others? Were they virtuous, as you represent, they never would have left their own country, since there they might have practised those virtues which you extol;—there they might have cultivated the earth, maintained themselves without prejudice to others, or injury to themselves; instead of roving about the world committing robberies and murders, having neither shame of men nor fear of God.

“Warn them not to enter into my dominions, for I solemnly vow, valiant as they may be, that if they dare to set foot upon my land, they shall never quit it alive—I will exterminate the whole race.”*

This was the first reply of the fierce Vitachuco; but he sent so many others, that every day there arrived two or three messengers, always sounding a trumpet, and each embassy conveying greater menaces than the preceding. The Cacique Vitachuco thought to terrify the strangers by the various and supernatural deaths, with which he menaced them. At one time he threatened, that the moment they entered his province, the earth should open and swallow them; that the hills by which the Spaniards would have to travel, should unite and bury them alive, that the trees of the forest through which they had to pass, should be blown down and crush them; that flights of birds should hover over and pounce upon them, with corroding poison in their beaks. He finally threatened that he would command the water, herbs, trees, and even the air to be poisoned, in such a manner, that neither horse nor rider, man nor beast, should escape with life. Thus, he declared, he would make an example of them to all who should henceforth dare invade his territory.

These extravagancies provoked the laughter of the Spaniards, who considered them the empty bravadoes of a savage; but the deeds of Vitachuco afterwards showed that they were the furious menaces of a proud warrior; who, it is

* The Inca, P. 1. L. 2. c. 21.

probable, was promised all these miracles by some native prophet.

These and many other messages arrived during eight days, spent by De Soto in traversing the domains of the two brothers, who did every thing in their power to gratify him and his army. They at length undertook a mission to Vitachuco. The fierce chieftain pretended to be finally won by their persuasions, and agreed to enter into friendly intercourse with the strangers; but desired first to know how many days they intended to continue in his dominions, what quantity of provisions they would require when they departed, and what other things would be necessary for their journey.

The two brothers sent an envoy to De Soto with this message; the latter replied, that they would not remain in the territory of Vitachuco longer than might be agreeable to him; neither did they desire any provisions but what he might think fit to give them, nor should they require any thing except his friendship.

CHAPTER XIV.

1539. THE chieftain, Vitachuco, pretending to be well contented with the Governor's reply, and a day being fixed for their meeting, the Cacique ordered an abundant supply of provisions for the troops and horses to be brought from all parts of his domain, and deposited in the principal village.

On the appointed day of meeting, Vitachuco went from his capital, accompanied by his two brothers and five hundred Indian warriors, adorned with plumes of various colours, and armed with bows and arrows of the finest workmanship. At the distance of two leagues, they found the Governor encamped with his army in a beautiful valley.

Their meeting was cordial, and the Cacique endeavoured to atone for past threats, by professions of present friendship and promises of future services, all which were graciously received by De Soto.

Vitachuco was about thirty-five years of age, of lofty stature, and strongly formed, as the Indians of Florida generally were; his countenance expressing the bravery of his spirit.

The ensuing day, the Spaniards entered the principal village in order of battle. It bore the name of its chief, and consisted of two hundred houses, large and strong, besides many other of smaller size in the suburbs. The Governor, his body guards and servants, together with the two brother Caciques, lodged in the house of Vitachuco, as it was sufficiently spacious to accommodate them all.

Two days were passed in feasting. On the third day, the two brothers of Vitachuco having obtained leave to return to their respective territories, departed, well pleased with the good treatment and numerous presents they had received from the Spaniards.

After their departure, Vitachuco redoubled his courtesy to the strangers, and seemed as if he thought he could not do enough to serve them. Five days only had elapsed, however, when Juan Ortiz came to the Governor, and informed him of a perfidious plot devised by the Cacique, which had been revealed to him by four of the native interpreters. Having selected several thousand of his bravest warriors, Vitachuco had ordered them to conceal their weapons in a thicket near the village, and appear at all times unarmed, so as to throw the Spaniards off their guard. On an appointed day, it was arranged that the Cacique should invite De Soto to a general muster of his subjects, drawn up in battle array, though without weapons, in order that he might see what a numerous force of Indian allies he had at his command for future conquests.

Trusting, from the good understanding existing between them, that the Governor would go forth carelessly and alone, a dozen of the most powerful Indians had received orders suddenly to seize and bear him into the midst of their warriors; who, assuming their arms, were to attack the Spaniards in their camp. Thus, between the surprise of the sudden assault, and their dismay at the capture of their General, the Cacique calculated upon an easy conquest: in which case he intended to make good his extravagant menaces, and inflict on his prisoners all kinds of cruel and tormenting deaths.

The Adelantado having been made acquainted with Vitachuco's perfidy, consulted with his Captains, and the result was a determination to seize Vitachuco precisely in the same manner as the latter had planned to seize the Governor;—

he would thus fall into his own snare. For this purpose, twelve of the stoutest soldiers were selected, to be near De Soto when he should go forth to view the Indian army. These, at a certain signal, were to make the Cacique prisoner. Every thing being secretly arranged, the Spaniards watched Vitachuco's movements, at the same time, maintaining an appearance of careless unconcern.

The day so much desired having arrived, Vitachuco came to the Governor early in the morning, and with much humility and seeming veneration, begged him to confer a great favour on himself and subjects, by quitting his camp to behold them arranged in order of battle, when he would see the number of his faithful allies, and have an opportunity of judging whether they knew how to form their squadrons, as well as his own troops, who were reported to be so eminently skilled in the art of war.

De Soto replied, with an unsuspecting air, that he should rejoice greatly to see them; but in order to make the display more striking, and furnish the Indians likewise with a spectacle worth beholding, he would command a mock fight among his horse and foot soldiers for Vitachuco's entertainment.

The Cacique did not much relish this proposal, but blinded by his passions, he agreed to the arrangement; trusting to the number and valour of his vassals to overthrow the Spaniards, however well prepared.

All things being arranged, the Spaniards marched out, horse and foot, in battle array, with glittering arms and fluttering banners. The Governor remained behind, to accompany the Cacique on foot, in order the better to disguise his knowledge of the latent treason. He went, however, secretly armed, and ordered two of his finest horses to be led caparisoned for service. One of these is especially mentioned as a beautiful and spirited animal. It was named Aceytuño, after a brave cavalier who had made it a present to the Governor.

Near the village was an extensive plain, bounded on one side by an extensive forest, and on the other, by two lakes; one of which, about a league in circumference, was clear of trees, but so deep, that three or four feet from the bank no footing could be found: the other at a greater distance from

the village, was more than half a league in width, and appeared like a vast river, extending as far as the eye could reach. Between the forest and these two lakes, the Indians formed their squadrons, having the latter on their right flank, and the former on their left. Their bows and arrows were concealed in the grass, that they might appear to be totally unarmed. Their force amounted to ten thousand chosen warriors, decorated with lofty plumes, which increased their apparent height; and, being drawn out with somewhat of military order, they made a magnificent display.

The Cacique and Hernando de Soto appeared on foot, each accompanied by twelve of his retinue, and each secretly having the same hostile determination against the other. The Spanish troops were to the right of the Governor; the infantry being drawn up near to the forest, and the cavalry marshalled upon the plain.

Between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, De Soto and Vitachuco arrived at the spot, which the latter had fixed upon for seizing of the Governor. Before the former, however, could make his preconcerted signal, a Spanish trumpet gave a warning blast.* In an instant twelve Spaniards rushed upon the Cacique. His attendants threw themselves before him, and endeavoured to repel the assailants, but in vain. He was borne off amid the shouts of his captors.

De Soto leaped, at the same moment, upon his favourite steed Aceytuño, and spurred among the thickest of the enemy, with that headlong valour which always distinguished him in battle. The savages had already seized their weapons. Their front ranks were thrown into confusion by the impetuous charge of De Soto; but as he pressed forward, a shower of arrows came whistling round him. They were principally aimed at his horse, the Indians always seeking to kill these animals, knowing their importance in battle. Four arrows wounded the generous animal in the knees, four pierced it in the breast, and it fell to the earth dead, as if shot by a piece of artillery.†

The Spanish troops, who, at the trumpet signal, had assailed the native squadrons, came, at this critical moment,

* Narrative, c. 11.

† Herrera, Decad. 6. l. 7. c. 11. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. l. 2. c. 23. Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

to the aid of their General. One of his pages, named Viota, a youth of noble birth, sprang from his horse and assisted the Governor to mount it. Once more on horseback, he put himself at the head of his cavalry, and spurred among the enemy. The latter had no lances to defend themselves; and being assailed by three hundred horse, broke and fled in every direction. A great number of those who were in the rear, took refuge among the entangled thickets of the forest; some threw themselves into the large lake and escaped, others scattered themselves indiscriminately over the plain, where more than three hundred were killed, and a few made prisoners.

A worse fate attended the enemy's vanguard, composed of his bravest warriors; who are always doomed to fare the worst in battle. After receiving the first impetuous charge of the cavalry, they fled, but unable to reach either the forest or the larger lake, more than nine hundred threw themselves into the smaller one. Here they were surrounded by the Spaniards, who endeavoured, by threats, promises, and occasional shots from their cross-bows and arquebusses, to induce them to surrender. The Indians replied only by flights of arrows. As the lake was too deep to give them footing, they adopted a mode of defence as singular as it was desperate. Three or four clung together, and supported each other by swimming, while one mounted upon their backs, and plied his bow and arrows. In this way an incessant skirmishing was kept up all day. Numbers of Indians were slain, and all their arms exhausted, yet no one expressed a desire to surrender.

At night the Spaniards posted themselves near each other, round the lake, the horse by two and two, the foot in parties of six, lest the savages should escape in the dark. Some of the latter endeavoured to save themselves by covering their heads with the leaves of water lilies, and swimming noiselessly to land; but the watchful troopers, perceiving that the water was agitated, spurred their horses to the bank, and drove their enemies back again into the channel,* in hope of tiring them out, and thus forcing them to capitulate. They moreover, threatened them with death, if they did not yield, but offered them peace, if they would surrender.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11

So obstinate were they, however, that it was midnight before any of them submitted, although they had been fourteen hours in the water. At length, the intercessions of Juan Ortiz, and of the four Indian interpreters, began to have effect. The most weary came on shore, one and two at a time, but so slowly, that by the dawn of day not more than fifty had surrendered. The remainder, seeing that these were kindly treated, and being persuaded by them, now gave themselves up in greater numbers, but still with extreme reluctance. Some when near the bank returned to the middle of the lake, until the love of life compelled them to yield. At ten o'clock, two hundred landed at the same time, and surrendered themselves, after having been in the water four and twenty hours. They were in a wretched condition, swollen with the water they had swallowed, and overcome with fatigue, hunger, and want of sleep. There yet remained in the lake seven Indians of such indomitable spirit, that neither the entreaties of the interpreters, the promises of the Governor, nor the example of their comrades, who had surrendered, had any effect upon them.* They treated all promises with scorn, defying both menaces and death. Thus they remained until three o'clock in the afternoon, and would, no doubt, have remained there until they had died; but the Governor, struck with admiration of their magnanimity, thought it would be inhuman to allow such brave men to perish, and consequently, ordered twelve Spaniards, who were expert swimmers, to go into the lake with their swords in their mouths, and drag them out by main force. As they were too much exhausted to resist, the Spaniards seized them by the legs, arms, and hair, drew them to land, and placed them upon the bank, where they lay extended, more dead than alive;† having, according to the Spanish narrator, been thirty hours in the water, apparently without putting their feet to the ground or receiving any relief:—an exploit, adds the Inca historian, almost incredible, and which I should not dare to record, but upon the autho-

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

† The Portuguese Narrative adds, that they were immediately put into irons. The Inca's account, however, of the conduct of the Spaniards towards these brave warriors, is more in accordance with the generous character of De Soto.

rity of several cavaliers and nobles, who both in the Indies, and in Spain assured me of its truth, confirming the authenticity of this extraordinary feat, related to me by a person, in all things worthy of belief.

The reader, however, without questioning the veracity of the cavaliers, may surmise that the savages had been enabled, from time to time, to snatch a few moments' repose, on shallows near the banks of the lake.

The heroic obstinacy of the seven Indians had extorted the admiration of the Spaniards. Moved to compassion by their present deplorable state, they bore them to the camp; and used such assiduous means for their recovery, that they were restored to animation in the course of the night.

On the following morning, De Soto summoned them before him, and pretending to be angry, demanded the reason of their desperate resistance, and why they had not surrendered as their companions had done.

Four of them, in the prime of manhood, replied, that they were leaders, chosen by their Cacique, from his confidence in their courage and constancy. Their actions were to justify his choice. They were bound to set an example to their children, to their brother warriors, and above all, to such as should thenceforth be appointed to command. They felt that they had failed in fulfilling their duty, and in vindicating their honour; and while they acknowledged the kindness of the Governor, regretted only that he had not left them to perish in the lake. "If you want to add to your favours," said they, "take our lives. After surviving the defeat and capture of our chieftain, we are not worthy to appear before him, or survive his dishonour."*

The Governor listened with admiration to these savage warriors: and when they had finished, turned to their three companions, who had remained silent. These were young men, not more than eighteen years old, sons and heirs of Caciques holding dominion over the adjacent provinces. De Soto demanded their reason for persisting so desperately in their defence, as they were not leaders, nor bound by the same obligations, as their companions.

They replied with a proud and lofty air, that they had

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. L. 2. c. 25. Herrera, Decad. 6. L. 7. c. 11.

been incited to hostility, not through a desire of gain, or any implacable spirit against the Spaniards, but merely from a thirst for glory : that although they were not chiefs, yet as the sons of Caciques, and destined one day to be Caciques themselves, they felt especially bound to signalize themselves by bravery in action, and by a contempt for suffering and death. "These, O offspring of the sun !" said they, "are the reasons for our obstinate hostility : if they are sufficient in your eyes pardon us ; if not, we are at your mercy. Strike us dead, for nothing is prohibited to the conqueror."

The brave spirit and heroic sentiments of these generous youths, charmed all the Spaniards present ; and their hearts were touched at seeing them exposed so young to such adversity. The Governor, likewise, who was of a compassionate nature, was moved to pity. He arose and embraced them as if they had been his own sons ; commending their valour and heroism, which he considered as proofs at once of noble blood and of illustrious descent.

He detained them in the camp two days, feasting them at his table, and treating them with every mark of distinction ; he then dismissed them with presents of linen, cloths, silks, mirrors, and other articles of Spanish manufacture. He also sent by them presents to their fathers and other relatives, with offers of his friendship. The young Caciques took leave of him with many expressions of gratitude, and departed joyfully for their homes, accompanied by a number of their countrymen whom the Governor had liberated.

The four captive leaders were retained prisoners, and on the following day summoned before the Governor, with their Cacique Vitachuco. De Soto reproached them all with the treacherous and murderous plot they had devised against him and his soldiers, at a time when they were professing the kindest friendship. Such treason, he observed, merited death : yet, wishing to give the natives a proof of his clemency, he pardoned them, and restored them to his favour. He warned them, however, to beware how they again deceived him or his army, lest they should provoke him to take a terrible revenge.

The Indians who had come out of the lake and surrendered themselves, were distributed among the Spaniards to serve them as menials, so long as their conquerors should

remain in the province. This was partly as a punishment for their participation in the late treason, and partly to deter the neighbouring tribes from like aggressions.

CHAPTER XV.

1539. VITACHUCO now remained in some sort a prisoner in his own house, but was treated with great kindness and respect, and dined at the Governor's table. Rage and hatred, however, still rankled in his heart; and he soon conceived another scheme of vengeance. Nine hundred of his bravest warriors were dispersed among the Spaniards; equalling the latter in number, and, as he thought, in personal prowess. They attended their new masters as slaves, and as the Spaniards, when at their meals were seated, off their guard, and many of them without weapons, the Cacique conceived that at such a moment it would be easy, by a preconcerted movement, for his subjects to strike a signal blow that should rid them at once of their oppressors.

Scarcely had Vitachuco conceived this rash scheme, than he hastened to put it into operation. He had four young Indians who attended him as pages. These he sent to the principal prisoners, revealing his plan, with orders that they should pass it secretly from one to another, and hold themselves in readiness, at the appointed time, to carry it into effect. The dinner hour of the third day was the time fixed upon for striking the blow. As Vitachuco would be dining with the Governor, and the Indians in general attending upon their respective masters, the Cacique was to watch his opportunity, spring upon De Soto and kill him; giving, at the moment of assault, a war-whoop that should resound throughout the village. This was to be the signal for every Indian in the place to grapple with his master, or any other Spaniard, and despatch him on the spot.

Many of the poor natives saw the perfect madness of this second project; but, accustomed to yield implicit obedience to their chief, they promised to carry it into execution or perish in the attempt.

On the day fixed, Vitachuco dined as usual at the table

of the Governor, who sought to win his friendship by the kindest attentions. When the repast was concluded, the savage stretched himself upon the bench on which he had been seated, and twisting his body from side to side, projected first one arm, then the other, to its full extent, clenching his fists, and drawing them up so that they rested on his shoulders; he then jerked out his arms two or three times, until every joint cracked like a snapped reed. In this way the Indians of Florida used to rally their strength when about to perform any extraordinary feat.

After this preparation, the Cacique sprang upon his feet, closed instantly with the Governor, at whose side he had been sitting, seized him with his left hand by the collar, and with the right gave him such a furious blow in the face, as to level him with the ground, the blood gushing out of his eyes, nose, and mouth, as if he had been struck with a club. The Cacique threw himself upon his victim to finish his work, at the same time giving the signal war-whoop so loudly that it might have been heard for a quarter of a league.

All this was the work of an instant, and before the officers present had time to recover from their astonishment, the Governor lay senseless beneath the tiger grasp of Vitachuco. One more blow from the savage would have been fatal; but ere he could deliver it, a dozen swords and lances were thrust through his body, and he fell dead, blaspheming heaven and earth at having failed in his deadly purpose.

The war-whoop of the Cacique had been heard and obeyed by his subjects throughout the village. On hearing the signal, the Indians who were attending upon their masters assailed them with whatever weapon or missile they could command. Some seized upon pikes and swords, which they wielded with great skill; others snatched up the pots in which meat was stewing at the fire, and beating the Spaniards about their heads, bruised and scalded them at the same time; some caught up plates, pitchers, jars, and the pestles with which they pounded the maize; others, bones remaining from the repast; others seized upon stools, benches, and tables, striking with impotent fury when their weapons had not the power to harm. The greater number, however, armed themselves with burning firebrands, which seemed to

have been provided for the purpose, and rushed like devils into the affray.

In this chance medley fight, many of the Spaniards were terribly burnt, bruised, and scalded; some had their arms broken, others were maimed by sticks and stones. One was knocked down by his slave with a firebrand and beset by three other Indians, who dashed out his brains.

Another was assailed with blows, his teeth knocked out, and he was on the point of falling a sacrifice, when several of his countrymen came to his assistance. The savage assailant fled, and mounted a hand ladder into a granary opening upon a court-yard, taking with him a lance which he found against the wall. The Spaniards attempted to ascend after him, but he planted himself in the door-way, and defended the entrance so bravely with his lance, that no one dared to approach him.* At length, Diego de Soto, a relative of the Governor, arrived in the court armed with a cross-bow. He presented it and took aim. The Indian never attempted to draw back or screen himself; his object was not to save his life, but to sell it as dearly as possible. At the instant De Soto drew his bow, he threw the lance. The steeled point grazed the Spaniard's right shoulder and the shaft knocked him down upon his knees, passing half a length beyond, and remained quivering in the ground. The aim of De Soto was more certain. His shaft pierced the Indian through the breast, and killed him upon the spot.

It was fortunate for the Spaniards that most of the Indians were in chains, and none of them regularly armed, otherwise their assault would have been attended with great carnage. As it was, many Spaniards were maimed, and four slain before the savages could be overpowered.

A signal vengeance was then taken upon the prisoners. Some of the Spaniards were so exasperated at the wounds they had received, and at hearing of their Governor's maltreatment, that they wrecked their fury upon every Indian in their power. Others, who were cavaliers, thought it beneath their dignity to take away the lives of slaves. They brought their prisoners, therefore, to the grand square of the village, and delivered them into the hands of the archers of the General's guard, who dispatched them with their halberts.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

Among the cavaliers who thus brought their captive slaves to be executed, was one of a small and delicate form, named Francisco de Saldaña. He entered the square, leading after him a powerful Indian, by a cord tied round the latter's neck. No sooner, however, did the savage perceive what was passing, and the fate that awaited him, than, driven to desperation, he closed upon Saldaña as he walked before him, seized him with one hand by the neck and with the other by the thigh, raised him like a child, turned him topsy turvy with his head downwards, and dashed him to the ground with a violence that stunned him. Jumping then upon his body he would have despatched him in an instant, had not a number of Spaniards rushed with drawn swords to the rescue of their comrade. The Indian seized Saldaña's sword, and received them so bravely, that though there were more than fifty, he kept them all at bay. Grasping the weapon with both hands, he threw himself into the midst of them, whirling himself round like a wheel, and dealing blows so rapidly and madly that no one dared oppose him, and they were obliged to dispatch him with their firearms.*

These, and many similar scenes of desperate valour, occurred in this wild affray. In order to embroil with the natives of the neighbourhood, the interpreters, and those Indian allies who had accompanied the Spanish army from the other provinces, so that they should not dare henceforward abandon the Spaniards, they were compelled to aid in destroying the prisoners, many of whom were tied to stakes in the public square, and shot with their arrows.†

In these battles and the subsequent massacres, fell Vitachuco and thirteen hundred of his warriors, the flower of his nation, among whom were the four brave leaders who had been rescued from the lake.

CHAPTER XVI.

1539. THE blow which the Governor, Hernando de Soto, had received from Vitachuco, had been so violent that it

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 11.

† Idem. The Portuguese narrator calls the village where this affray took place Napataca.

was half-an-hour before he recovered his senses. His face was bruised and disfigured, and several of his teeth were broken, so that for three weeks he could eat no solid food. He and his wounded soldiers were obliged to remain four days in the village, before they were sufficiently recovered to undertake a journey. On the fifth day, he resumed his march, departing in search of another province, called Osachile.*

The first day they journeyed four leagues, and encamped on the bank of a deep river, which divides the two provinces, and over which it was necessary to throw a bridge. They had scarcely begun their operations, when they beheld the Indians on the opposite side, in hostile array. Abandoning their work, they hastily formed six rafts, on which a hundred men passed over, fifty cross-bowmen and arquebusiers, and fifty horsemen, the latter taking with them their horses and saddles.

As soon as they reached the land, their horses were driven into the water, and made to swim across. Their owners received them on the opposite shore, saddled and mounted them immediately, and galloped into the plain. The Indians flying, the Spaniards worked without molestation at the bridge, which was finished in a day and a half.

The army passed the river, and after travelling two leagues through a country free from woods, came to large fields of maize, beans, and pompions, among which were a few scattered habitations. While they were dispersed about the fields, a number of savages lurking in ambush among the grain, assailed them with their arrows and wounded many. The Spaniards proceeded in pursuit of them, lance in hand. There was some sharp skirmishing; many natives were wounded, and a few taken prisoners. The latter had chains put about their necks, were distributed among the soldiers, and made to carry the baggage, pound the maize, and perform other servile employments.†

The Spaniards arrived at Osachile, a village about ten leagues from that of Vitachuco. It contained two hundred houses, which were deserted, the Cacique and his people having sought refuge in the woods, terrified by rumours of

* This name is spelled Uzachil, by the Portuguese historian.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

Vitachuco's death.* The Governor sent offers of peace and friendship to their chief by the Indian prisoners. He made no reply, neither did any of the envoys return.

The village of Osachile† resembled most of the Indian villages of Florida. The natives always endeavoured to build upon high ground, or at least to erect the houses of their Cacique upon an eminence. As the country was very level, they constructed artificial mounds of earth, the summits of each being capable of containing from ten to twenty houses. Here resided the Cacique, his family, and attendants. At the foot of this hill was a square, according to the size of the village, around which were the houses of the most distinguished inhabitants. The rest of the people erected their wigwams as near the dwelling of their chief as possible.

An ascent in a straight line, from fifteen to twenty feet wide, led to the top of the hillock, and was flanked on each side by trunks of trees, joined and thrust deep into the earth; other trunks of trees formed an ascent by steps. Every other side of the mound was steep and inaccessible.

While they resided in the village of Osachile, the Spaniards learnt that they were not far from the province of Apalachee, the country of the Apalachians. They had heard a wonderful account of the extent and fertility of this district, and the bravery as well as ferocity of its inhabitants. Throughout their march, the natives had predicted that the warriors of Apalachee would transfix them with their lances, hew them in pieces, or consume them with fire. De Soto was little moved by their menaces, his great desire being to see this province; and if it were as fertile and abundant as represented, to winter there. After remaining, therefore, but two days in Osachile, he resumed his march.

The Spaniards were three days traversing an uninhabited desert, twelve leagues in extent, which lay between the two provinces, and about noon on the fourth day, arrived at the great morass.‡ It was bordered by forests of huge and lofty

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

† The river Oscilla may take its name from this old Indian village and province.

‡ This is supposed by some to have been the great swamp of Okefenokee lying in lat. 31° North, on the frontiers of Georgia and Florida. Mr. M'Culloch, in his researches, imagines it to be the Ohahichee swamp, and

trees, with a thick underwood of thorns and brambles, and clambering vines, so interwoven and matted together as to form a perfect barrier. Through this the Indians had made a narrow path, scarcely wide enough for two persons to walk abreast. In the centre of the morass was a sheet of water half a league wide, and extending as far as the eye could reach.

De Soto encamped at an early hour on a fine plain on the skirts of the forest, and ordered out a hundred foot, consisting of cross-bowmen, archers, and pikemen, with thirty horse, and twelve expert swimmers, to explore the passage of the morass, ascertain the depth of water, and search for a ford, against the following day.

The Spaniards had penetrated but a little way into the forest, when they were opposed by native warriors. The passage, however, was so narrow, and so completely walled on each side by a thorny and impervious forest, that not more than the two foremost of each vanguard could come to action. The Spaniards, therefore, ordered two of the stoutest to the front, armed with sword and buckler, followed by two cross-bowmen and two archers. In this way they drove the savages before them until they came to the water. Here, as both parties had room for action, there was some hard fighting, several being killed and wounded on both sides.

Finding it impossible, under such determined opposition, to examine the depth of the water, the Spaniards sent word to the Governor, who came to their aid, with the best soldiers of the army. The enemy having likewise received a reinforcement, the battle became still more fierce and bloody. Both fought to their waists in water, stumbling among thorns and brambles, twisted roots, and the trunks of fallen trees. The Spaniards were aware, however, that it would not do to return without discovering the pass; they continued, therefore, to charge the enemy with great impetuosity. Succeed-

his opinion is entitled to great credit, as he has investigated the subject more thoroughly than most writers. It must, however, remain a matter of conjecture; for it is almost impossible to trace the route of De Soto and his followers, at the commencement and close of their expedition, as the distances given by both the Portuguese and Spanish chroniclers, are often exaggerated and sometimes contradictory. Vide *Kear's Voyages and Travels*, v. 5. p. 456. *McCulloch's Researches*, p. 524. *Darby's Florida*, p. 19, 20.

ing at length in driving them out of the water, they observed that the narrow pass of which they were in search continued through the stream, being so cleared of thorns, roots, and sunken trees, that the Indians could wade up to their middles, except over about forty paces of the mid-channel, where it was too deep to be forded. This they crossed by a bridge composed of two trees fastened together. Both sides of the morass were bordered by the same kind of impervious forest, and traversed by a narrow path. The distance through the two forests, and across the morass, was about a league and a half.

The Governor, having well reconnoitered the strait, returned with his men to the encampment. Here he held a council of war, in which the difficulties and dangers of the case were discussed, and the mode of meeting them determined upon.

It was arranged that two hundred picked men should proceed in advance to secure the pass, and prepare a way for the passage of their main body. One hundred of these were to be horsemen, and one hundred foot soldiers.

The former being better armed than the infantry, and protected by bucklers, always received less injury from the enemy's arrows; they were, therefore, to take the lead on foot, as horses would only be an embarrassment in such a narrow strait. In this way they would, as it were, form a shield to the hundred foot soldiers, consisting of arquebusers and archers.

They were all to be provided with bills, hatchets, and other implements for clearing an encamping place in the opposite forest, for as the Spaniards would have to pass the narrow ford one by one, in the face of a ferocious enemy, it would be impossible for the whole army to traverse the morass and both borders of woodland in one day. It appeared advisable, therefore, to make a halt in the opposite forest.*

CHAPTER XVII.

1539. ALL the requisite preparations being made, two hundred picked men quitted the camp, each soldier carrying with

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. L. 2. c. 1.

him his day's allowance, consisting of a little boiled or toasted maize. Two hours before dawn they entered the defile of the forest, which they traversed as silently as possible until they reached the water, when they soon found the ford where the stones, roots, and sunken logs had been cleared away. Keeping along this, they came to the bridge constructed of fallen trees and thrown across the deepest part of the channel. This they passed without molestation from the Indians, who had left it unguarded, not imagining that the Spaniards would dare to penetrate the forest, or ford the deep and perilous passage of the morass by night.

When the savages, however, perceived at daybreak that their enemies had passed the bridge, they rushed forward with great fury, raising loud cries and howls, to dispute the passage of the morass yet to be traversed, which was about a quarter of a league in length. The Spaniards received their attack manfully;—both parties fighting up to the middle in water. The natives were soon repulsed and driven into the defile of the forest, into which they could only enter one at a time. This being extremely narrow, and walled in by an impervious wood, it was easy to blockade the passage and prevent the enemy from sallying forth. Forty men were ordered to do so, while the remaining hundred and fifty proceeded to cut down trees and clear a place for the army to encamp.

In this manner they remained all day, the Indians in the heart of the forest shouting and yelling, as if to frighten with their noise those whom they would not engage with their arms; some of the Spaniards watching, others felling trees and burning the fallen timber. When night came, each remained where he happened then to be. Disturbed by the yells of the savages, and obliged to maintain a constant vigilance, the Spaniards passed a sleepless night.

Next morning the troops undertook the passage, but although they met with no opposition from the enemy, they found many difficulties in the ford, and being obliged to perform the transit one by one, were the whole day in crossing.

By night they were all encamped on the cleared ground, where, however, they enjoyed but little sleep, in consequence of the yells and frequent attacks of their enemies.

At day-break they pressed forward through the defile of

the second forest, driving the natives slowly before them, who retreated step by step, plying their bows incessantly, so that every inch of ground was won at the edge of the sword.

At length, after fighting onward for half a league, they emerged from this thick thorny brake into more open woodland. Here the Indians, foreseeing that there would be more scope for the horses to come into action, had taken precautions accordingly.

It was in this very morass, though not in the immediate neighbourhood where the Spaniards were now engaged, that Pamphilo de Narvaez had been defeated about ten or eleven years before. The Indians, profiting by the experience then gained, and encouraged by the recollection of that triumph, trusted they should have like success in the present instance.

To render the horses ineffective, they had blocked up the open places of the forest with great logs, and branches fastened from tree to tree; and in the close and matted parts, they had cut narrow passages by which they might dart forth, make an assault, and disappear again in an instant.

As soon, therefore, as the Spaniards entered this more open woodland, they found themselves assailed by showers of arrows from every side. Their enemies being scattered among the thickets, sallied forth, rushed among the troops, plied their bows with great rapidity, and plunged again into the forest. The horses were of no avail; the arquebusiers and archers seemed no longer a terror; for during the time that a Spaniard fired, and reloaded his musket, or placed a bolt in, and sent it from his cross-bow, an Indian would discharge six or seven arrows;—scarcely had one arrow taken flight before another was in the bow.

In their hampered situation, the Spaniards finding it impossible to assault the enemy, their only alternative was to defend themselves and press forward. While, too, that they were exposed to the galling missiles of their foes, they were insulted by the taunts and threats of the savages, who reminded them of their victory over Pamphilo de Narvaez, and menaced them with a like defeat.

The Spaniards toiled full two leagues, and fought their way forward through this forest. Irritated and mortified by these galling attacks, vexatious taunts, and the impossibility

of retaliating, they at length emerged into an open and level country. Here, overjoyed at being freed from their forest prison, they gave the reins to their horses and free vent to their smothered rage, scoured the plain, lancing and cutting down every Indian they encountered, out of revenge for recent annoyances and the past defeat of Narvaez. Few of the enemy were taken prisoners, but many were put to the sword; and thus did they suffer severely for the presumptuous confidence inspired by their former triumph over the Spaniards.*

The Spaniards had now arrived at a fertile region covered with villages and fields of grain for which the province of Apalachee was famous throughout the country. Wearied with their toilsome march, and almost incessant fighting, they encamped for the night in the open plain, near a small village, but could obtain no repose. All night long they were disturbed by the yells of Indians, by their repeated assaults, and by the arrows discharged into the camp.

At daybreak the troops resumed their march through extensive fields of maize, beans, pompions, and other vegetables, extending on each of the road as far as the eye could reach, and interspersed with small cabins, showing a numerous but scattered population.

The inhabitants justified their ferocious and warlike reputation, by making continual attacks, sallying from their dwellings, or starting up from their corn-fields where they had lain in ambush; and though the Spaniards wreaked upon them sanguinary revenge, slaughtering them without mercy, yet nothing could check the fury of the survivors.

After fighting their way for two leagues, the Spaniards came to a deep stream bordered by a forest,† where the savages had erected palisades and barriers to impede the passing of the horse, as well as to protect themselves. As this was one of the strongest and most important passes, and in a manner their last hope, the Indians had prepared to defend it vigorously.

Having reconnoitered the pass, the Spaniards made arrangements accordingly. The best armed horsemen alighted,

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. L. 2. c. 2. Herrera, Hist. Ind. Decad. vi. L. 7. c. 12.

† Mr. M'Culloch supposes this to be the river Uche.

and buckling on their shields advanced with their swords and hatchets, gained the pass and broke down the barriers. The Indians fought desperately; several Spaniards were killed and many wounded, but they succeeded in forcing their way with less difficulty than they had apprehended.

Having forded the stream, they marched two leagues further without opposition, through the same fertile and cultivated country; then, choosing a place clear from forests, encamped for the night. After four days and three nights of watching, toiling, and fighting, they hoped, that in this open place, where the horses had free career, they should be able to enjoy repose without molestation. The darkness, however, encouraging the assaults of their restless and daring foes, obliged the Spaniards to keep constant watch with their weapons in their hands.

Even the captured Indians evinced that implacable and unconquerable spirit for which the Apalachian tribe was famous. Though in the power of their enemies, they maintained an air of haughtiness and defiance, boasting of their origin, vaunting the valour of their nation, and telling the Spaniards that they would soon arrive at the village of their Cacique, where he and a host of warriors were waiting to destroy them. The name of this Cacique was Capafi, the first they had heard of whose name was different from that of his principal village. Learning that this Indian capital was actually but two leagues distant, on the following morning, Hernando de Soto marched in advance, with two hundred horse and a hundred foot. On their way they put all the Indians they met with to the sword.

On reaching the village they found it deserted by the Cacique and his men. Pursuing the fugitives, they killed some, and captured others, but the Cacique made his escape. They then fixed their quarters in a village named Anhayca,* containing two hundred and fifty large houses. The Adelantado took possession of the Cacique's dwelling, which stood at one end, and was superior to the rest.

In addition to this native capital, the Spaniards understood that there were many hamlets in the province, containing from fifty to a hundred houses more or less, besides a multitude of habitations scattered about the country. The pro-

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

vince throughout was reputed to be pleasant, and the soil fertile, producing maize, cucumbers, beans, and wild plums; the rivers abounding in fish, which the natives caught in vast quantities throughout the year, and dried for use.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

1539. THE army remained quiet in the village of Anhayca for several days, recruiting from its past toils, although the enemy did not fail to continue their attacks both by night and day. The Governor now sent detachments of horse and foot to explore the surrounding country for fifteen or twenty leagues. Arisa Tinoco and Andreas de Vasconceles, two captains, were sent in different directions to the northward. They returned, the one in eight, and the other in nine days, having met with no adventures worthy of record. Both reported that they had visited many populous villages, and that the country was fertile and free from morasses and extensive forests. Juan de Añasco, the Contador of the army, had been sent about the same time to the southward. De Soto often chose him for undertakings that required a stout heart and active spirit, though he was sometimes prone to be a little hasty in temper and positive in command. He had under him forty horse and fifty foot, and was accompanied by Gonzalo Silvestre and Gomez Arias. The latter was a relation of the Governor's wife, and a hardy soldier, seasoned in all kinds of perils and vicissitudes by land and water, as most Spanish adventurers were in those days. He had seen rough times in Moorish warfare: he had been a slave in Barbary, and to adventurous valour, added sage experience in council.

Thus accompanied, Juan de Añasco set off towards the south, in hopes of coming upon the ocean, which was said to be less than thirty leagues from Anhayca. He was guided in his expedition by an Indian, who professed great fidelity and attachment to the Spaniards.

For two days they travelled over an excellent road, wide and level, passing two small rivers that were easily forded and arriving at the village of Aute, which was abandoned by the

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. l. 2. c. 4. Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

inhabitants, but well stocked with provisions. Taking with them a supply for four days, they continued on the same road. At length the Indian diverged from it, and led the way into tangled forests without any path. The ground was in many places rough and broken, and covered with fallen trees. In other places there were deep bogs overgrown with grass; these presented the appearance of firm land, but the horse and foot sank into them and were almost smothered.

In this wilderness the detachment wandered about for five days, frequently crossing their former track, until their stock of provisions was nearly exhausted. Three times they came, as they thought, within sound of the distant surges of the sea, and each time the Indian took an opposite direction. In their vexation and perplexity they began to suspect his fidelity, and that he had a design they should perish with hunger in this inextricable forest, even though he should share the same fate. These suspicions, however, they kept to themselves, for they had no other guide.

They now determined to return to Aute, obtain a fresh supply of provisions, and renew their search. Their return was the more toilsome, as they had to retrace their footsteps in order that they might not miss the road, and the mire of the bogs was so much trampled, that they sank deeper in it than before. In this painful manner they travelled four days, and their suspicions of their Indian guide revived. They grew peevish in their conduct towards him; quarrels ensued between him and the soldiers; he was beaten, and would have been killed on the spot had not Añasco interfered. Exasperated to revenge, he watched an opportunity at night while the soldiers slept, and snatching a brand from the fire, struck those who had maltreated him. This only brought on him severer punishment. A chain was put round his neck, and the other end given to a soldier to keep strict watch over him.

Next morning, in the course of their march, the guide sprang suddenly upon the soldier who had him in charge, threw him to the ground, and began to trample upon him.

Upon this the Spaniards assaulted the Indian with sword and pike: even Juan de Añasco, losing all temper, raised himself in his stirrups, and with both hands, gave him a

terrible thrust with his lance; after which, as he lay insensible, a hound was turned loose, which tore him to pieces.

The guide being slain, and their anger thus cruelly appeased, the detachment began to think which way they should direct their steps. In this dilemma they turned to an Indian whom they had captured on their return to Aute. From him they gathered by signs, and a few words which they understood, that it would be impossible to reach the sea by their present route, on account of the swamps and forests; but that if they returned to Aute, he would conduct them by a direct road to the coast, and to the very place where Pamphilo de Narvaez had built his vessels and embarked.

They had no alternative but to trust to this new guide, hoping that the fate of his predecessor would have a salutary effect upon him. They returned, therefore, to the village of Aute, after fifteen days of toilsome and fruitless wandering.

As Gomez Arias and Gonzalo Silvestre were riding in advance, they captured two native prisoners near the village. On questioning them about the sea-coast, and the proper route towards it, they confirmed all that had been said by the present guide. The Spaniards comforted themselves with the hope, therefore, that they would now be able to accomplish the object of their journey; and with this persuasion, slept soundly and contentedly that night, after their toils.

1539. On the following day Juan de Añasco and his followers set out once more from the village of Aute, under the guidance of the three Indians, by the new route which the latter pointed out. The road was wide and open, free from impediments, except one narrow marsh, in which the horses did not sink over their fetlocks. They had not journeyed more than two leagues when they arrived at a spacious bay,* and proceeding along its shores, to their great joy came at last to the very place where the unfortunate Pamphilo de Narvaez and his people had sojourned. Here they found the remains of a rude forge, where the iron-work for the vessels had been wrought; and around it lay scattered

* Evidently the Bay of St. Marks, or Apalachee. See Charlevoix *Journal Historique*, Let. 34.

charcoal and cinders. There were large trunks of trees, also, hollowed out into troughs, in which the horses had been fed; and not far off lay the bones of the horses that had been killed.

The Spaniards gazed with melancholy interest upon these relics of a disastrous expedition, and eagerly sought to obtain from their guides further particulars respecting Narvaez and his men. The Indians had picked up some Spanish phrases during the time that Narvaez had remained in their neighbourhood; with these, aided by signs, and by words of their own language partly understood by their hearers, they contrived to give some account of the transactions at the bay. They led the Spaniards, step by step, over the scenes visited by Narvaez; showed the place where ten of his men had been surprised and slain; and pointed out every spot where anything of note had happened to that ill-fated commander.

Añasco and his companions searched in every direction to find if any letter had been left in the hollow of a tree, or if there were any inscription on the bark; as it was a common practice with discoverers to leave some memorial wherever they touched for any length of time;—they could, however, find nothing of the kind. They then proceeded along the shores of the bay to the sea, which was three leagues distant. Here, finding some old canoes cast upon the beach, ten or twelve expert swimmers embarked in them and sounded the bay, in which they found sufficient depth for large ships.

After this, they placed signals in the highest trees, so as to be apparent to any one sailing along the coast; and took down, in writing, a minute account of the place and its bearings, for the information of those who might hereafter seek it. Having taken these precautions, they made the best of their way back to the army. De Soto was rejoiced to see them, for their long absence had caused him great uneasiness. He was highly satisfied, also, to learn that they had discovered so excellent a harbour, and the very same from which Pamphilo de Narvaez had set sail with his ill-fated barks.

CHAPTER XIX.

1539. As the season was far advanced, De Soto resolved to proceed no farther for the present, but to winter in the province of Apalachee. He caused the village of Anhayca, therefore, to be strongly fortified, additional buildings to be erected for barracks, and the surrounding country to be foraged for provisions. In the mean time, friendly messages and presents were repeatedly sent to the Cacique Capafi, who, however, rejected all overtures, and buried himself in a forest, surrounded by morasses and perilous defiles.

As De Soto saw no use in keeping up a garrison at Hirrihigua, in the bay of Espiritu Santo, he determined to send orders to Pedro Calderon to break up his encampment there, despatch the vessels that lay in the harbour, and march with the forces under his command to rejoin the army in their winter quarters. How to get these orders to Pedro Calderon was now the question; for whoever bore the message would have to retrace the wilderness through which the army had marched, to recross the deep and rapid rivers, tread gloomy forests and miry swamps, and probably encounter tribes of warlike and cruel savages, smarting from their late conflicts, and thirsting for revenge.

After mature consideration, he resolved to intrust the perilous enterprise to a band of troopers, sufficient in number to make head against a large force of savages, yet not too numerous to move with secrecy and expedition.

No sooner had he declared his determination, than there was a competition among the hardy young cavaliers of the army to be sent upon this hazardous service; for its very danger excited their ardour. De Soto chose from among them thirty lancers, and appointed Juan de Añasco as their leader. He was accompanied by Gomez Arias, who had been his comrade in his late expedition to the bay of Aute.

Among the lancers was one Pedro Moron, a mestizo, or half-blood, between Spaniard and mulatto, and a native of the island of Cuba. This soldier, besides being an admirable swimmer, was gifted with the faculty of smelling almost equal to that of a dog. In the island of Cuba, he had often traced a fugitive Indian into the thickets and caves where

the savage had hid himself. He could also scent fire at the distance of a league, though no light or smoke was perceptible.* In company with him went another mestizo, his friend and countryman, likewise a native of Cuba.

It was on the 20th of November,† (1539,) that this small and intrepid band set out on their hazardous enterprize. As celerity of movement was important, each horseman was lightly equipped, with a casque, a coat of mail under his doublet, and a lance. A pair of alforjas or wallets were slung across the saddle bow, in which, besides a small supply of food for himself, and corn for his steed, the rider had two or three spare horse-shoes, and a few nails.

Long before day, the gallant troopers were on the road.‡ Pressing forward, they scoured along at full speed, when practicable, fearing lest the rumour of their coming should precede them, and give the Indians time to assemble and dispute the passes. Overtaking two natives, they put them to death, to prevent their giving alarm to their comrades scattered about the fields. They rapidly traversed the extensive morass and vast forests of Apalachee, without opposition, and halted in an open plain on its skirts; ten of their number keeping watch while the remainder slept.

Before it was light they were again in their saddles, and urging their horses, made the best of their way over that desert tract lying between the morass of Apalachee and the village of Osachile. Apprehensive that the natives might have heard of their approach, and would make stout resistance in the village, Añasco ordered a halt. As night closed in, they pushed onward with great caution, and came in sight of the village about midnight. Not stopping to reconnoitre, they loosened their reins, clapped spurs to their horses, and dashed through the village at full speed. Galloping on about a league further, they deviated from their course for a short distance, and halted for the remainder of the night; having travelled this day more than thirteen leagues.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. L. 2. c. 7.

† Portuguese Relation.

‡ The account of this romantic and perilous expedition of the thirty troopers, is entirely from the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. The Portuguese Narrative makes very brief mention of it.

At daybreak they resumed their journey, putting their horses to their speed, lest the natives, scattered about the fields, should give alarm. Thus they proceeded for five leagues to the river Osachile, at the risk of killing their horses; but these were, luckily, so high mettled that they suffered little.

On approaching the river, Gonzalo Silvestre, who had pushed his horse more than his companions, was in advance. He was fearful lest the river should have swollen since the army had crossed it. Fortunately, however, the water had fallen; at which he was so overjoyed that he plunged in with his horse, swam the stream, and mounted the bank on the other side. When his companions came up they were rejoiced to see him on the opposite bank, for they had entertained the same fear, that the river might have increased. They all dashed in, gained the further side without accident, and with light hearts, dismounted and breakfasted on the green sward.

They were soon again on horseback, and approached the village of Vitachuco at a moderate pace. Thinking to have found the place as they had quitted it, they looked forward to some severe fighting with the inhabitants, and expected to pass through it at the point of the sword. A consultation was held, and it was resolved, that none should stop to fight, but that they should cut their way through the enemy at full gallop; as the death of one of their number, or of a horse, would be a serious loss, and increase the perils of the expedition. Thus determined, they spurred on, and were soon relieved from their apprehensions. They found the village a scene of utter desolation; the houses burnt, the walls thrown down, and the bodies of those Indians who had fallen on the day of battle, heaped up into a mound, and left uninhumed. The Spaniards afterwards learnt, that the natives had destroyed this village, from an idea that it had been built on an evil and ill-fated site; and that they had left the corpses of their people unburied, food for carrion birds and wild beasts, because, according to their superstitious belief, the unfortunate and defeated in battle were infamous and accursed.

CHAPTER XX.

1539. THE Spaniards checked their horses, and wound slowly through the ruins of the village, wondering at the desolation around them. They had left it but a short distance behind them, when they encountered two Indian warriors, on a hunting expedition. The moment the Indians perceived the horse advancing, they took refuge under a large walnut-tree close at hand. One of them, however, afraid to trust to the shelter of the tree, fled, and made an attempt to reach the woods on the opposite side of the road, but two horsemen pursued him, and before he gained the wood, transfixed him with their lances.

The other Indian, being of a more courageous spirit, undauntedly kept his station under the tree; and, as fortune usually favours the daring, he met with a better fate. Fixing an arrow in his bow, he fearlessly faced the Spaniards, who came galloping one after the other, and threatened to shoot if they approached him. Some of the cavaliers, irritated at his insolence, or moved by jealousy of his courage, would fain have dismounted and attacked him lance in hand.

Añasco, however, interfered, representing to them that there was neither valour nor prudence in attacking a desperate man, especially at a time when the death, even of a horse, would be deeply felt, and when too they were so badly provided with medicines for healing the wounded. He then ordered them to diverge from the road, lest the Indian should shoot any of the horses as they passed; for this was greatly dreaded. The savage allowed the Spaniards all to pass, and finding that, instead of attacking him, they had turned on one side, he ran after them, calling them mean-spirited cowards, and taunting them for flying from a single foe. At this moment there arose a wild outcry from every part of the surrounding forests. The savages started up on all sides, and called upon each other to barricade the road. But the Spaniards gave their horses the reins and spur, and soon left the enemy behind them. This night they halted in a level and beautiful plain, having travelled seventeen leagues since morning, and the last eight through the province of Vitachuco.

On the fourth day they journeyed another seventeen

leagues through the same province. The natives, thirsting for revenge, on account of their late defeat, were on the alert; and seeing the Spaniards passing through their country with so small a force, determined to massacre them. They, therefore, sent seven native runners to spread an alarm of the coming of the white men, in order that their warriors might assemble at some narrow pass, and dispute the way. The Christians, however, suspecting their designs, pursued the runners so closely, that they took them all prisoners. At nightfall they encamped as usual in an open plain.

Having roused themselves from their slumbers, a little past midnight, and resumed their march, by sunrise they had already travelled five leagues, and had arrived at the river Ochali, where, on a former occasion, the Indians had killed the greyhound. They expected to find the river shallower than when they crossed it before; but, on the contrary, it had overflowed its banks, and was now a deep, turbid, rapid stream, boiling and foaming with whirlpools, fearful even to look upon, and dangerous to traverse.

The Spaniards held a consultation for a few moments. Their first object being to secure the opposite bank before the Indians should arrive, it was determined, that twelve of the best swimmers, stripping themselves of every thing except their casques and coats of mail, and disencumbering their horses of saddles and saddle-bags, and taking only their lances in their hands, should swim their steeds to the opposite bank, and take post there, to protect the crossing of their companions with the baggage. At the same time fourteen soldiers were ordered to construct a raft of drift wood, with all speed, to transport the baggage and such of the party as could not swim; and four to mount guard at their present post, until the passage should be effected.

This was immediately put into execution. The twelve swimmers threw off all superfluous clothes, and taking their lances, urged their horses into the stream. Eleven of them landed in safety at a large opening on the opposite bank. The twelfth swimmer was Juan Lopez Cacho, page to the Governor, and the same youth who once accompanied Gonzalo Silvestre on his perilous errand to the camp. In attempting to cross, he drifted with his horse somewhat below the opening. Finding he could not stem the current up to

the place where his companions had landed, he let his horse swim lower down the river, and sought some other landing place. He attempted several times to scramble up the bank, but it was like a wall, and there was no footing for the horse. He was compelled, therefore, to return to the opposite shore, but before he reached it his horse began to falter through fatigue. Calling for assistance to his companions, who were felling wood for the raft, four threw themselves into the water and dragged him and his horse on shore. By the time they reached it, the poor youth was so thoroughly chilled, and exhausted by struggling so long in the cold water, that he was more like a corpse than a living being.

Leaving the cavaliers to complete the crossing of the river, we will cast a look back at the camp, to notice the proceedings of its commander.

Having despatched Juan de Añasco and his thirty lancers on their expedition, the next thought of De Soto was for the security and comfort of his army. Ever since he had been quartered in the village of Anhayca, the Indians had not ceased to harass him either by attacks or alarms, day and night. The whole neighbourhood was beset by them, lurking about in ambush, and watching every movement of the Spaniards, so that a soldier could not stray a bow-shot from the camp without being way-laid and assaulted.

Knowing the devotion of the natives to their chieftains, it occurred to De Soto, that if he could once get Capafi, the Cacique of Apalachee, into his power, his subjects would cease from their vexatious assaults. It was a long time, however, before he could discover where that chieftain had concealed himself, for he did not take the field with his warriors like the other Caciques. In fact, the chief, though formidable from his sovereign power, was so enormously fat that he could not walk. When he went about in his dwelling, he usually did so upon his hands and knees, and when he moved from place to place, he was borne in a litter on the shoulders of his subjects.

At length De Soto received intelligence that the Cacique, being too fat to travel, had posted himself in the midst of an extensive forest, about eight leagues from the camp; the road to which lay through tangled thickets, and treacherous morasses, which rendered the place almost inaccessible. It

was, moreover, strongly fortified and garrisoned by a band of the choicest Apalachian warriors, so as to be deemed by them altogether impregnable.

As an enterprise against this stronghold was one of peculiar peril, De Soto, with his accustomed intrepidity, took it upon himself, and, at the head of a body of horse and foot, in three days made his way, with great difficulty, to the Indian citadel, the construction of which deserves particular mention.

In the heart of this forest, the Indians had cleared a piece of ground, and fortified it strongly, for the residence of the Cacique and his warriors. The only entrance or outlet was by a narrow path, cut through the wood. At every hundred paces, this path was barricaded by palisades and trunks of trees, at each of which was posted a guard of the bravest warriors. Thus the fat Cacique was ensconced in the midst of the forest, like a spider in his web, and his devoted subjects were ready to defend him to the last gasp.

When the Governor arrived at the entrance of this perilous defile, he found the enemy well prepared for its defence. The Spaniards pressed forward, but the path was so narrow, that the two foremost only could engage. They gained the first and second palisade at the point of the sword. Here it was necessary to cut the osiers and other bands with which the Indians had fastened the beams. While thus occupied, they were exposed to a galling discharge of arrows, and received many wounds. Notwithstanding all these obstacles, they gained one palisade after the other, until, by hard fighting, they arrived at the Cacique's place of refuge.

Here was the hottest of the battle. The Indians, driven to desperation by the imminent peril of their Chief, threw themselves upon the swords and spears of the Spaniards. The latter were animated by the sight of their prey, and excited to furious zeal by the example and voice of De Soto, who not only fought as usual, in the thickest of the fray, but called on his men by name, and cheered them on to action.

The obstinate conflict lasted a long time, many feats of prowess being performed on both sides, but the Indians, for want of defensive armour, fought upon unequal terms, and were most of them cut down. The Cacique called out to the survivors to surrender. The latter having done all that

good soldiers could do, and seeing every warlike effort vain, threw themselves on their knees before the Governor, and offered their own lives, but entreated him to spare the life of their prince.

De Soto, moved by their valour and loyalty, received them with kindness, assuring them of pardon for the past, and that thenceforth he would consider them as friends. Capafi, not being able to walk, was borne in the arms of his attendants to kiss the hands of the Governor, who, well pleased to have him in his power, treated him with the utmost kindness.*

CHAPTER XXI.

1539. DE SOTO returned well pleased to the village of Anhayca, flattering himself that he should meet with no further molestation from the savages, as he held their Cacique captive. His hopes, however, were vain, for the Indians, freed from the charge of protecting their chieftain, employed themselves in molesting the Christians. The General considering this a base instance of ingratitude, for his forbearance in having refrained from ravaging the country, threatened Capafi with a war of extermination.

The Cacique expressed much grief at the conduct of his subjects, and informed De Soto that the most eminent of them were concealed in a thick forest, five or six leagues from the camp. He offered to go thither, guarded by a body of Spaniards, and persuade them to submit, adding, that no messages would avail, as they were not to be convinced that he was not a prisoner in irons and harshly treated. De Soto, accordingly, ordered a company of horse and foot to escort him, charging them to watch him closely, and not allow him to escape. They quitted the village before morning, and directing their march in a southerly direction, reached the forest about sunset.

Here the Cacique sent some of his train to the warriors, concealed in the forest, with orders that they should assemble before him on the following morning. Trusting that this order of Capafi would be punctually obeyed, the Spaniards betook themselves to rest for the night, having first placed

* The Inca, P. 2. L. 2. c. 10.

sentinels at the out-posts, and a strong guard round the Cacique; whose unwieldly bulk, in fact, seemed a sufficient guarantee for his safety. Partly through negligence, however, and partly through weariness from three days' journey, the guard fell asleep. Upon this, the wily Chieftain, watching his opportunity, crawled on all-fours through the camp, and soon fell in with a party of his subjects, who raised him on their shoulders, and bore him off to the forest.

When the Spaniards awoke, the Cacique was not to be found. They beat up the neighbouring thickets, but without success. Each wondered, and questioned the other, how so unwieldy a man could have escaped without being seen or heard. The sentinels all swore that they had been exceedingly vigilant; it was unanimously agreed, therefore, that the Indians must have conjured up some demon to carry him off through the air. They returned to the army deeply mortified; followed by the Indians at a distance, taunting and jeering them, but offering no other molestation. Upon reaching the camp much crest-fallen, they invented a thousand fables to account to the Governor and his officers for the prisoner's escape. All agreed they had witnessed strange sights during the night, and insisted that the Cacique could not have eluded their vigilance, unless he had been spirited away by devils or by magical arts.

The Governor, though aware that the soldiers had neglected their duty, knew there was no remedy, and in order not to displease them, pretended to be convinced of the truth of what they had represented. He increased their satisfaction by saying the savages were such notorious necromancers that they might have performed even more wonderful things.

We must now return to the thirty cavaliers whom we left preparing to cross the river Ocali. Those employed in felling the timber, soon finished the raft; being provided for such emergencies with hatchets and cords. When the raft was completed, they fastened two large ropes to it under the water, by which it could be drawn backwards and forwards from bank to bank.

Two good swimmers carried one of the ropes to the opposite shore. They had but just accomplished this, when the natives of Ocali rushed down to the river to assail them.

The eleven cavaliers who had already crossed, closed with the enemy, killed some, put the rest to flight, and remained masters of the field; nevertheless, great numbers of arrows were discharged at them from a distance.

The combat ended, they called for their cloaks to be sent over on the first raft, as a north wind had risen, and being dripping wet, without having any other covering but their shirts and coats of mail, they were suffering severely from the cold.

The raft was pulled backward and forward many times before all the baggage, and such of the Spaniards as could not swim, were ferried across. As fast as they landed, the majority hastened to join their comrades, who were keeping the savages at bay, while the remainder unloaded the raft.

The four horsemen who had been posted as a rear-guard, to protect the men as they embarked, had succeeded in covering them from assault. Two of them, Hernando Athanasio and Gonzalo Silvestre, remained for the last crossing, which was likely to be the most perilous. When the raft was laden and ready for the passage, Athanasio sprang upon it, leading his horse into the water to swim alongside. Silvestre then charged the savages, drove them from the shore, returned at full speed, leaped from his horse, urged him into the water, cast loose the fastening of the raft, and springing upon it, gave a signal for it to be hauled over to the opposite bank.

All this was accomplished with such promptness, that they were already half way across the river, and out of danger, before their enemies could reach the shore.

The horses performed their parts admirably. They required neither spur nor scourge, and scarcely any leading; they never hesitated, but seemed to comprehend their real danger—to be conscious that an enemy was hovering near, and that their safety depended upon their docility and perfect obedience to their masters.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when the whole detachment had crossed the river, neither man nor horse having received a wound. They marched towards the village, where they purposed resting, as Juan Lopez Cacho had been so long in the water, as to be completely chilled, and unable to move hand or foot.

The savages opposed their approach to the village, until the wives and children of the former had time to fly to the woods. When they considered their families to be in safety, they abandoned the place. The Spaniards entered and halted in the middle of the public square, fearing to quarter in the houses, lest, being separated, the enemy might surround and make them prisoners.

They kindled four large fires in the square, near which they laid poor Juan Lopez and covered him with their cloaks. One of his friends gave him a dry shirt, which he chanced to have with him—at this time a most acceptable gift.

They remained in the village the rest of the day in a state of great anxiety. The situation of Juan Lopez rendered it impossible for him to travel this night, yet his companions feared lest the delay might give the natives time to spread alarm or gather in numbers, and barricade the road. Resolving, however, not to abandon their companion, they tethered one half the horses, and fed them with maize, while the remainder went the rounds. Some of the troops occupied themselves in drying their saddles and clothes, and others in replenishing the saddlebags with maize; for although there was abundance of dried grapes, plums, and various other fruits, they took nothing but Indian corn, which answered as food both for themselves and horses.

As night closed in, mounted sentinels patrolled the village and its vicinity, to give warning in case an enemy should approach. About the mid-watch, while going the round, two horsemen, heard a low murmuring noise, as of men advancing. One of them immediately galloped off to put his comrades on their guard, while the other remained to reconnoitre and ascertain the meaning of the sound. In the brightness of the starlight, he descried a large body of savages moving towards the village, and hastened to give the alarm. The Spaniards, finding that Juan Lopez was somewhat recovered, threw the cloaks of his companions over him, and seating him on a horse, fastened him in the saddle, a soldier leading his horse by the reins. In this manner they quitted the village in deep silence, before the enemy arrived, and travelled so expeditiously, that at daybreak they were six leagues from Ocali.

They continued their journey with the same expedition, in

order that the rumour of their approach might not precede them, killing all the natives they encountered near the road, lest they should give an alarm. In the uninhabited tracts they slackened their pace, that the horses might rest and be ready to run when necessary. Thus passed this day, which was the sixth of their wayfaring, having travelled almost twenty leagues, and part of the distance through the province of Acuera, a country peopled with warlike savages.

On the seventh day, Pedro de Atienza declared himself to be ill. They made light of his declaration, and not to lose time urged him forward. He continued from time to time to complain, but without being attended to, until having ridden in this way for several hours, he fell dead beside his horse. His comrades were shocked at his sudden death, and at their own want of sympathy in his sufferings. There was no time to be lost, however, in ceremonies. They dug a grave with their hatchets upon the spot, buried him by the way side, and then rode on, deploring the loss of a brave soldier and well-trying comrade.

That night, after travelling twenty leagues, they encamped on the border of the great morass. It was so extremely cold, in consequence of a keen north wind, that they were compelled to kindle fires at the risk of warning the Indians of their vicinity. Twenty resolute men would have been sufficient to dispute this pass, and massacre every one of them, as the savages would possess great advantage in their canoes over the Spaniards, who could not avail themselves of their horses, and had neither archers nor cross-bows to dislodge the enemy. Thus troubled and anxious, one third of their number kept watch at a time, while the others slept, in order to recruit their strength for the fatigues of the coming day.

CHAPTER XXII.

1539. THE Spaniards had slept but a few hours when they were awakened by the sufferings of Juan de Soto, who had been the companion of Pedro Atienza, and who died almost as suddenly, being overcome by excessive fatigue.

Some of the troopers fled from the neighbourhood of the corpse, declaring that the plague had broken out among them

and caused these sudden deaths. Gomez Arias, vexed at their panic, cried out, "If you fly from us, whither will you go? You are not on the river banks of Seville, nor in its olive groves." Ashamed of their alarms, the fugitives returned and joined in prayers for the dead, but would not aid in interring the body, insisting that their companion had died of the dreaded pestilence.

When day dawned, they prepared to pass the morass. Eight Spaniards, who could not swim, proceeded to the bridge, and having replaced its railing, carried over the saddles of their horses and the clothes of their companions. The remainder, perfectly naked, vaulted upon their horses and endeavoured to force them into the water; but it was so cold that they shrank back. The soldiers then attached ropes to their halters, and four or five swam to the middle of the current attempting to drag the horses after them, others struck them behind with long poles. The animals, however, planted their feet firmly in the ground, and could not be moved.

Two or three were at length urged into the stream, but when they came to the deep water, the cold was so great that they turned back, dragging the swimmers after them. For more than three hours the latter thus laboured in vain. At length they succeeded in forcing two horses over, one of which belonged to the leader, Juan de Añasco, the other to Gonzalo de Silvestre. Both of these cavaliers, being among the number of those who could not swim, had already passed by the bridge. As soon as their horses had landed, they saddled and mounted them, in order to be ready for action should an enemy approach.

Notwithstanding two horses had thus led the way, no other, either by coaxing or cudgelling, could be prevailed upon to follow Gomez Arias, the hardy chief of nineteen companions who, entirely naked, had been labouring up to their waists in water more than four hours, exposed to the keen north wind, and so thoroughly chilled that their naked bodies were almost black. They were wearied in body, and vexed in spirit; and seeing all their exertions useless, were almost driven to despair.

At this juncture, Juan de Añasco, having saddled and mounted his horse, as has been stated, advanced on the

opposite side, as far as he could ford, until he reached the edge of the deep channel. He was enraged that no more horses had crossed; and without inquiring the reason, or regarding the comfortless plight of Gomez Arias and his comrades, attributed it to a want of respect towards himself as their leader. Under this impression, he cried out angrily, "Gomez Arias, bad luck to you! why do you not pass those horses over?"

The spleen of honest Gomez, who was a rough soldier, being already sufficiently roused by the toils, sufferings, and vexations he had endured, this speech of his commander cut him to the quick. Casting a grim and surly glance at Añasco, "Bad luck to *you*," he cried, "and to the drab of a cur that bore you. There you sit on your horse, comfortably clad and wrapped up in your cloak, and never think that we have been for more than four hours in the water, half frozen with cold. Dismount—and come here! and we shall see how much better you can do than we have done."

Juan de Añasco, though prone to be passionate, recollected himself and restrained his anger. The companions of Gomez Arias told him the true state of the case: he saw that he had been wrong in speaking so abruptly to the veteran, whose rough reply was excited by his vexatious situation, rather than by any personal disrespect.

Juan de Añasco, by the hastiness of his temper, often drew upon himself similar rebuffs in this and other expeditions; for there is nothing which a partizan commander ought more strictly to observe, than the obligation of treating his comrades with kindness and civility.

When this discord was appeased, the Spaniards renewed their efforts, and the noontide sun having somewhat tempered the coldness of the water, the horses were slowly forced across. By three in the afternoon all had passed over.

They were, indeed, in a wretched plight, drenched with water, worn out with excessive toil, benumbed with cold, exhausted with hunger, and what added to the misery of their condition, they had but little provisions to recruit their strength and spirits. They uttered no complaint, however, so much rejoiced were they at having crossed this much-dreaded pass, without having been opposed by an enemy; for, had only fifty savages hemmed them in, their destruction

must have been inevitable. The forbearance of the natives in not attacking them, was most probably owing to the distance of the morass from any hamlet or village;—it was, moreover, now the winter season, during which period, the Indians, being naked, seldom quitted their houses.

The Spaniards determined to pass the night in an extensive plain near the morass, for they and their horses were so much fatigued that they could not travel a step. They made large fires, therefore, to warm themselves, and found consolation in the reflection, that from this place unto Hirrihigua, whither they were journeying, they should encounter no further impediments.

At night they observed the same precautions as before, and resumed their march before daybreak. In this way they travelled two days without meeting any thing worthy of record. The horses of the two companions who had died, went free, saddled and bridled, sometimes following the others, sometimes taking the lead and keeping as regularly in the route as if they had riders to guide them. The night of the tenth day was passed within three leagues of the village of Mucozo.

A little past midnight the Spaniards were again in the saddle. They had not gone far before Pedro Moron, the half-caste, so noted for the quickness of his scent, suddenly cried out: "Take heed! I smell fire at no great distance." His companions looked about, but could neither see nor smell fire.

After proceeding about a league further, Moron again stopped. "I am certain," said he, "that there is fire somewhere, close at hand." They now advanced warily, and after a short time discovered a fire in a forest close by. Drawing silently near, they perceived a number of Indians, with their wives and children, seated round it, cooking and eating fish. Though they supposed them to be subjects of the friendly Cacique Mucozo, they resolved to capture as many as they could, in order to ascertain whether this chieftain continued at peace with Pedro Calderon. In case he did not, they determined to make all his subjects who might fall into their hands prisoners of war and send them as slaves to Havana. They accordingly dashed forward to surround the group. On hearing the sudden tramp of horses, the

savages started up and made for the woods. Many eluded pursuit in the darkness, and many escaped in the thickets. The Spaniards took prisoner about twenty persons, women and children, who continually called out the name of Ortiz, to remind their captors of the past kindness of their Cacique. But this availed nothing; they were secured.

The half-starved Spaniards, without dismounting, made a hearty meal of the fish, not waiting to cleanse them from the sand with which the trampling of the Indians and of the horses had covered them.

Refreshed by their hasty repast, they continued their journey, keeping clear of the village of Mucozo. After travelling five leagues, the horse of Juan Lopez Cacho could not proceed; having never recovered from its sufferings in crossing the river Ocali. Its rider had fared better, having been restored, partly by the sudden alarm of the night, and chiefly, by the natural vigour of his age, being not more than twenty years old. Throughout the remainder of the journey he was as active as any of his companions.

Finding it impossible to get the horse on, although within six leagues of the journey's end, it was left in a meadow where there was abundance of pasturage, and its saddle and bridle hung in a tree; so that any Indian who should use the horse might also have its furniture. It was feared, however, that as soon as the Indians found it, they would kill it. After travelling nearly five leagues, the detachment arrived within three miles of the village of Hirrihigua, where they expected to find Captain Pedro Calderon, with forty horse and eighty foot. They examined the ground narrowly as they rode along, hoping to discover some tracks of horses, for as the village was so near, and the country free from wood, it seemed to them natural that their countrymen should have ridden out as far as this, and even farther. Discovering, however, no traces of the kind, they were filled with dismal forebodings, fearing that Calderon and his men had been massacred by the natives, or had quitted the country in the caravels. In either case, what were they to do—surrounded by enemies, having no bark and without the means of building one? To return to the Governor appeared impossible, after what they had already suffered. Having discussed their forlorn condition, they unanimously agreed, that if they

did not find their companions in Hirrihigua, they would retire into some of the fastnesses of the adjacent forests, where there was abundance of grass for the horses. They resolved to kill the superfluous horse, dry its flesh as food for the journey, and when the other horses should be sufficiently recruited attempt to return to the Governor. Should they be attacked upon the road, they determined to die like true and faithful soldiers; and if they arrived safe, they would at least enjoy the satisfaction of having fulfilled their commander's orders.

With this heroic resolve they proceeded; the further they advanced, however, the more were they confirmed in their fears; for they discovered no trace of their comrades. At length they came to a small lake, less than half a league from the village. Here they found fresh tracks of horses, and near the water, marks of cloths having been recently washed there.

A joyful shout burst from the lips of every Spaniard. The horses were dragging wearily along, but the moment they scented the traces of their companions, they threw up their heads, pricked their ears, and neighed loudly, plunging and leaping about as if just taken from the stable: setting off at a quick pace, they soon accomplished the remainder of their journey.

The sun was setting as they came in sight of the village. The night patrol were defiling out on horseback, with lance and shield, and shining armour. Juan de Añasco and his followers fell into the same order, and advanced at a furious gallop, as if tilting in the lists, rending the air with their huzzas and joyous shouts. Pedro Calderon and his men sallied out to meet them, and received them with open arms. Instead of inquiring, however, after the health and welfare of the army, the Governor, and their particular friends, they anxiously demanded whether there was any gold in the country?

Añasco, without delay, inquired of Calderon whether the natives of the province, and the vassals of Mucozo, had continued friendly; and learning they had, he directed that the prisoners recently taken should be immediately liberated, and sent home to their country loaded with presents. By them he sent an invitation to Mucozo to pay him a visit with a

train of attendants to convey to their dwellings the sea stores and other articles which, on the Spaniards' departure, they intended leaving behind: at the same time, Añasco recommended to the Cacique's care the horse which had been left in his territory.

The Indians departed delighted with this kind treatment, and on the third day came the good Mucozo, followed by his warriors and a train of attendants; two of whom led the horse, while the others carried the saddle and bridle, as they knew not how to use them. Mucozo embraced Añasco and his comrades, and after enquiring for the Governor and the army, requested him to relate the particulars of his journey, the battles and skirmishes, the toils and privations which he and his detachment had suffered. When Mucozo had heard the whole detail, he observed that he should rejoice if he could impress his own spirit and will upon the other Caciques throughout the land, that all might treat the Governor and his people with the kindness which, as he considered, they so well merited.

Juan de Añasco was struck with the difference between the reception he met with from this noble chieftain, and that of his own countrymen, whose first inquiry had been after gold. With a grateful heart, he thanked him for the kindness he had shown to Calderon and his soldiers, and delivered to him many friendly messages from the Governor.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1539. JUAN de Añasco now prepared to discharge the duties of his mission. He was to embark in two brigantines, and to coast to the westward until he should arrive at the Bay of Aute, which he had discovered with so much toil. He brought orders, also, from the Governor to Captain Pedro Calderon, to rejoin him with his troops, by land: and Gomez Arias was to sail for Havana in the caravel, to convey an account to Doña Isabel de Bobadilla of the expedition.

The whole harbour was in a bustle. The brigantines and caravel were careened and repaired, the sea stores, sails, rigging, and equipments carried on board, the crews mus-

tered and embarked. Equal stir was made for the march by land, in preparing the furniture for horses, furbishing armour and weapons, and selecting every article necessary for the service.

After all the necessary preparations had been made, there remained an abundance of articles, which the Spaniards could not take with them ; such as cassava bread, clothing, cuirasses, helmets, bucklers, lances, pikes, besides sea stores, and quantities of steel and iron, which the Governor had provided in such profusion for the expedition. All these superfluous commodities were given to Mucoza as a reward for his constant friendship. The Cacique found himself suddenly possessed of a profusion of valuable stores. During four days that he remained at the harbour, his subjects were incessantly busy going to and fro like ants, bearing off these presents to his capital. Every preparation being made and the crews embarked, besides thirty soldiers who were distributed in the brigantines and caravel, and twenty Indian women for Doña Isabel,* the different commanders took leave of each other, and of their respective comrades. Juan de Añasco set sail in the brigantines in quest of the Bay of Aute ; Gomez Arias in the caravel for Havana, and Pedro Calderon prepared to march, as soon as he should have seen them fairly under weigh.† With this cavalier and his little army we shall continue for the present, hoping to meet Juan de Añasco at some future day.

No sooner had Añasco and Arias set sail, than with a force of seventy horse and fifty foot, Calderon sallied out of Hirrihigua, leaving the gardens and fields which had been planted in full vegetation. They reached Mucozo's village on the evening of the second day. The kind Cacique came out to welcome them, and hospitably quartered them for that night. The next day he escorted them to the frontier of his dominions, where he took leave of them with many expressions of regret.

Pedro Calderon continued his march until evening, when he encamped in a plain skirted by a forest. The night darkened apace, and suddenly a party of natives rushed into the encampment. The Spaniards attacked them sword in

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, P 2. L 2. c. 27.

hand, dispersing and pursuing them to the entrance of the woods. As soon, however, as the former returned to the camp, the savages were on their track, and in this manner annoyed them all night long. During these skirmishes, one of the horsemen pursued an Indian; who, finding the horse gained upon him, and that he would soon be overtaken, turned suddenly round, fixed an arrow in his bow, and discharged it at the same moment that the horseman threw his lance. The savage fell dead, but not unrevenged; for his arrow pierced the horse's breast with a mortal wound, so that Indian, Christian, and horse, rolled together upon the plain.

The Indian must have been one of their chief warriors; for, on his fall, the savages immediately fled into the forest and were not again seen.

The horse that was slain was the famous steed of Gonzalo Silvestre. The Spaniards, astonished that this powerful animal should have died so suddenly, merely by the wound of an arrow, opened its body and found that the shaft had penetrated its breast, and passed through its heart to the very entrails. So adroit were the natives of Florida in the use of the bow.

Next evening the Spaniards slept on the margin of the grand morass, and traversed it without opposition from the enemy on the following morning. They made forced marches, the horsemen dismounting by turns, and relieving the foot soldiers. Thus they travelled for several days, without a single conflict with the natives, finding refreshment and food in the villages, which were all abandoned, the whole country being as silent as if it had been uninhabited, until they arrived at the warlike province of Apalachee.

Having encamped upon the skirts of a thick forest bordering the morass, next morning they entered the defile, half a league in length, and reaching the water, the foot soldiers passed over the Indian bridge of logs, while the horse swam the deepest portion of the channel. Calderon, finding that they had traversed the most perilous portion of the morass, wished to hasten over the remainder. He, therefore, ordered ten horsemen to take behind them five arquebusiers, and five cross-bowmen, and seize upon the narrow pass through the forest which was on the opposite bank. They set off at

full speed through the water, when shrill cries and yells arose from different quarters, and Indians rushing from behind bushes, brakes and the trunks of huge trees, discharged showers of arrows at them.

At the very first discharge, the horse of Alvaro Fernandez, a Portuguese, was killed, and five others wounded. The horses, panic-struck with the sudden attack and clamour, turned and fled; their masters being unable to restrain them. Plunging and rearing in the water, which was up to their breasts, they threw off the foot soldiers, who were all wounded, as the wheeling of the horses exposed their shoulders to the enemy's arrows. The Indians perceiving this, advanced eagerly to dispatch them, giving their war-whoop and shout of victory to encourage their companions.

The suddenness of the attack, the overthrow of the ten archers, the flight of the horses, the thronging of hordes of natives to the combat, produced a scene of wild confusion. The Spaniards were bewildered, and as the battle was in the water, and the calvary could render no assistance, they were greatly alarmed for the result of the conflict.

The savages, on the contrary, encouraged by the success of their first efforts, attacked the fallen archers with greater fury. The nearest Spaniards rushed across the bridge to their rescue. A formidable band of native warriors advanced on the left; about twenty paces before them stalked an Indian, perfectly naked, fearless and bold in his bearing, with a large plume of feathers upon his head. His object evidently was to gain the shelter of a large tree, which lay between him and the Spaniards, from behind which he might annoy them, and prevent their passing. Gonzalo Silvestre, who happened to be near, perceived his intention and shouted to Anton Galvon. Galvon was one of those who had been dismounted and wounded, but like a true soldier, he had retained his cross-bow. He followed Silvestre, who shielded him with a quilted garment, which he had found floating in the water; advising him to shoot at none but the leading Indian, who was evidently the Chief. In this manner they gained the tree, but this movement did not escape the observation of the savage; he bent his bow, and in an instant discharged three arrows. They were sent with unerring aim, but Silvestre received them upon the garment

which he used as a shield, and which, being wet, proved an effectual defence.

Anton Galvon, who had reserved his aim until the savage should draw near, now fixed a bolt in his cross-bow, and sent it through the Indian's breast; the latter staggered a few paces, crying out to his followers, "These traitors have slain me." They rushed to his aid, received him in their arms with dismal murmurs, and passing him from one to the other, conveyed him from the field of battle.

The combat was no less bloody in other parts of the morass. A large body of Indians advanced on the right. A valiant soldier, Andres de Meneses, who with ten or twelve others, stood to oppose them, receiving four arrows in his thighs, fell into the water; luckily his large shield covered him, and the enemy leaving him, shot at his companions, five of whom were grievously wounded.

The savages, elated by their successes, and considering the victory as already theirs, redoubled their efforts. The Spaniards were evidently losing ground, for only fifty of their number could be brought to engage, and the cavalry could neither render assistance, nor molest the enemy. They fought, however, desperately; it was a struggle for life. At this critical moment, information reached the Indians that their chief was mortally wounded. It gave an immediate check to their ardour; they soon began slowly to retreat, but nevertheless kept up a constant discharge of arrows.

The Spaniards perceiving these signs of faltering among their adversaries, rallied, charged, and driving them out of the morass, pursued them to the narrow defile of the forest, taking possession of the cleared field in which De Soto had formerly encamped.

This the enemy had strongly fortified, but had abandoned it in order to assist their Chief. Here the Spaniards halted for the night, as the place was strong and only accessible through the defile. Scarcely one among them escaped without a wound. The least injured bound up and dressed the wounds of their comrades. Not an eye was closed that night. Every man maintained anxious watch, the savages who hovered around them, keeping up a dismal howling until break of day.

The lucky shot of Anton Galvon had proved the salvation

of the Spaniards in this desperate contest; for the Indian laid low by his bolt, proved to be the hostile Chief, whose fall changed the tide of battle in their favour. But for his timely destruction every one of them would probably have been massacred.

Early in the morning they resumed their march, driving their foes before them through the defile of the forest. At length they issued into the open woods, where the enemy availed themselves of the same barriers and palisades which had stood there when De Soto passed. They sallied from behind these, and, discharging a shower of arrows, retreated, wounding in this way about twenty Spaniards. Every inch of ground was disputed for a distance of two leagues, when the Spaniards came to a plain, where the enemy left them through fear of the cavalry. They now marched five leagues further, and halted in an open country, that the wounded might have some repose; but as soon as night set in, the Indians again beset their camp with dreadful yells, and taunting speeches. The little army, worn out by repeated assaults, still kept on the alert; the horsemen sprang into their saddles and pursued the enemy, who launched their arrows and then fled in every direction; but only to repeat the same annoyances the moment the troopers returned to the camp.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1539. At daylight, the Spaniards continued their march, and came to a forest skirting a deep stream, which the enemy had obstructed with palisades and strong barriers. Some of the Spaniards having formerly surmounted these obstacles, were enabled to advise the mode of attack. It was determined that the horsemen should dismount, being the best armed, and that thirty of them with shields, swords, and hatchets, should join the vanguard to destroy the barricades—that those who were lightly armed should mount the horses, which were of no use in this pass, and go with the baggage and serving-men in the centre, and that the other twenty, who were well armed, should form a rear-guard. In this order they entered the forest.

The Indians, seeing that their enemies were few in number, and that they could not use their horses, charged with great impetuosity, expecting an easy conquest. The latter forced their way to the palisades, where the battle became obstinate, the Spaniards struggling to cut a road, and the Indians to defend it. While some of the soldiers kept the enemy at bay with their swords, others hacked with their hatches at the tendrils of wild vines which fastened the barriers. In this way they demolished them one by one, but at the expense of many grievous wounds. Alvaro Fernandez, the Portuguese, lost another horse, which was transfixed with arrows.

At length, the Spaniards having fought their way across this perilous pass, travelled with less trouble over the plains, where the enemy, dreading the horse, avoided them. But whenever there were any woods near the road, the Indians were sure to be in ambush. Issuing from the thickets they made their attacks, shouting, and repeating frequently these words: "Where are you going, robbers? we have already killed your chief and all his warriors."

In this manner, these one hundred and fifty Spaniards, skirmishing and fighting all day, arrived at sunset in Apalachee. They had to travel slowly, on account of the number of wounded, ten or twelve of whom afterwards died; one of these was Andres de Meneses.

As they drew nigh the village they became exceedingly anxious. Perceiving neither man nor horse, nor any sign of life, they began to apprehend disaster. It was thought that the yells of the savages must have reached the village, and as their comrades came not to their assistance, they dreaded lest the boasts of the natives, that they had despatched De Soto and all his army, should prove true.

On their nearer approach, however, their anxiety was relieved by the sight of the Governor, who received them like an affectionate father. They were hailed, too, by their comrades, with shouts of joy, as men risen from the dead; for the Indians had alarmed De Soto, by assuring him that they had all been slain:—a fate he thought too probable, when he considered that this little band of a hundred and twenty men had to cut their way through a wilderness in arms, which he, with a force of eight hundred toops, had found such difficulty in passing.

Among the first to greet Pedro Calderon on his arrival at Apalachee, was Juan de Añasco. This cavalier had accomplished his voyage in the two brigantines without any accident, and arrived safely in the Bay of Aute on the 29th of December.* The Governor had calculated the probable time it would take Añasco to make his voyage and journey, and had taken precautions accordingly. For twelve days before his arrival companies of horse and foot marched, and counter-marched, between the camp and the bay, so that while one body was advancing the other was returning. In this way they kept the road clear of the enemy, and when at the bay, placed their standards in the highest trees, that they might be readily descried from the sea.

Juan de Añasco saw them, landed confidently, and without molestation, and leaving his brigantines well manned in the bay, reached the camp under escort of the companies.

It was a great gratification for Añasco and Calderon to meet, and once more join the Governor and their companions in arms. Companionship in dangers had attached them strongly to each other;—fortitude and valour made them ready, when together, to brave the greatest perils. Thus happily united, in the midst of a hostile wilderness, this band of adventurous Spaniards passed their winter together in the village of Apalachee.

CHAPTER XXV.

1539. A FEW days after the arrival of Juan de Añasco, the Governor, summoned Diego Maldonado, and ordered him to proceed to the Bay of Aute, set sail with the brigantines, and explore the coast to the westward, taking note of all its rivers, bays and harbours.

Maldonado set sail as directed, and coasted along to the west for seventy leagues, when he discovered a fine harbour, called Achusi.† It was land-locked and com-

* Portuguese Relation, c. 12.

† The present Bay of Pensacola. Vide Martin's Louisiana, v. 1. p. 10. The Portuguese narrator calls this port Ochuse, and says that Maldonado set out by land with a detachment of fifty foot soldiers, and marched along the coast until he discovered the bay. We follow the Inca's account, which is adopted by Herrera and others.

pletely sheltered from all winds, ample enough for a fleet to ride in, and its shores were so bold, that a vessel might anchor close to the land.

The natives invited him on shore with many offers of hospitality. Seeing he mistrusted them, they came without hesitation on board the brigantines, and traded with the Spaniards, bringing whatever they demanded. This friendly intercourse gave Maldonado opportunities to go about in his small boats to take soundings, and note all the advantages of the bay. The Cacique, moved by the representations which his subjects brought of the brigantines, and relying on the good faith of the strangers, in a luckless hour ventured on board. The Spaniards, having made all the necessary observations, and being apprised of the rank of one of the visitors, hastily weighed anchor, thus requiting the hospitality of the simple-hearted natives by treacherously carrying off their Cacique. In two months from the time of his departure, Maldonado was again at the camp.

De Soto was rejoiced at the accounts given of the Bay of Achusi. It was the kind of seaport well calculated to facilitate his scheme of empire, being a convenient place for receiving reinforcements and supplies from Havana, necessary to the prosecution of his grand project of conquest and colonization. It being now the latter part of February, the Governor dispatched Maldonado with the brigantines to Havana, to proclaim his success, and to return with those vessels, the caravel of Gomez Arias, and any other shipping he could purchase, freighted with clothing, weapons, and ammunition of all kinds. Gomez Arias was likewise to return with him, as De Soto had a great opinion of the latter's prudence and sagacity in council, and his hardihood, perseverance, and intrepidity in the field. They were to rendezvous in the Bay of Achusi in the following month of October, at which time De Soto proposed to meet them there, having in the interim, made a circuit through the interior of the country, to explore the surrounding provinces,* which he determined to do during the thaw.

The natives of Apalachee were a race of large stature, amazing vigour of arm and intrepidity of spirit, and seemed to delight in war. During the whole winter they kept up

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 12. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. L. 2. c. 23.

alarms day and night, never ceasing to employ stratagems and assaults; but the vigilance and promptness of the Governor, and his great skill in Indian warfare, foiled every effort of consequence. They never attempted to oppose any body of soldiers drawn up in squadron, but roved in bands about the forests to surprise foraging parties, or lurked among thickets to cut off stragglers from the camp.

If a small party repaired to the forest to cut wood, the sound of their axes would sometimes attract a host of foes, who, coming upon them by stealth, would surround and massacre them, break the chains of the prisoners who had accompanied them to carry away the wood, and bear off the scalps of the slain as trophies to decorate their bows. In this way they destroyed more than twenty soldiers, and rendered the vicinity of the village so dangerous, that the Spaniards rarely ventured any distance unless well armed and in strong parties. One day, however, Juan de Añasco and six other cavaliers, extended their ride into the adjacent fields. Not intending to venture far, they wore no defensive armour, nor any weapons but their swords, except one of their number, named Estevan Pegado, who had a helmet and lance.

While thus sauntering slowly forward, seeing in a vista of the wood, a male and female Indian, they spurred forward to make them prisoners. The female was so terrified at sight of the horses, that she stood like one petrified. The husband took her in his arms, ran with her to the woods, and thrusting her among the bushes, returned to where he left his bow and arrows, and seizing them, boldly fronted his enemies.

The Spaniards, pleased with his spirit, determined to take him alive. Rushing upon him, therefore, before he had time to discharge an arrow, they threw him down, and crowded upon him to prevent his rising, while Estevan Pegado with his lance kept him to the ground. The harder he was pressed, the more furious he became. He writhed and struggled under the horses' feet, wounding them in the flanks and belly with the thrusts of his bow. At length, with a desperate effort, he sprang on his feet, grasped his bow in both hands, and gave Estevan Pegado such a blow across the forehead that the blood streamed down his face. "Plague

on it," cried the Spaniard, "if we treat this savage thus daintily he will kill us all seven." So saying, he rose in his stirrups, thrust his lance through the Indian's breast, and pinned him to the earth.

In this affray all the horses were more or less wounded, and one of them afterwards died of its wounds. The cavaliers returned to the camp, wondering at the prowess of the savage, and not a little ashamed to confess that a single Indian had treated them so roughly.

At another time, a party of twenty horse and fifty foot sallied out on a foraging expedition to gather maize. After they had collected an ample supply, they placed themselves in ambush in a hamlet about a league from their quarters, in hopes of entrapping some of the natives. In the upper part of what appeared to be a temple, they placed a sentry, who after some time descried an Indian moving stealthily across the public square; casting furtive glances, as if he dreaded a concealed foe.

The sentinel giving the alarm, Diego de Soto, nephew to the Governor, one of the best soldiers in the army, and an excellent horseman, spurred into the square to capture him. Diego Velasquez, Master of Horse to the Governor, followed at a hand gallop, to aid De Soto in case of need.

The Indian, seeing them approach, trusted for safety to that fleetness of foot for which his countrymen were remarkable. Finding, however, that the horse gained upon him, he took refuge under a tree, as the natives were accustomed to do, when they had no lances to defend themselves from the horses. Here, fixing an arrow in his bow, he awaited the approach of his enemy. Diego de Soto galloped up to the tree, but not being able to ride under it, wheeled close beside it and made a thrust with his lance over his left arm at the Indian as he dashed by. The latter evaded the blow, and drawing his arrow to the head, discharged it at the moment the horse was abreast of him. The shaft entered just between the girth and stirrup-leather; the wounded animal went stumbling forward fifteen or twenty paces and fell dead.

Diego Velasquez spurred to the relief of his comrade, and passing the tree, made a lunge with his lance as De Soto had done. The same event followed. The Indian dodged the

lance, discharged another arrow just behind the stirrup-leather, and sent the horse tumbling to take its place beside its companion. The two cavaliers sprang upon their feet, and advanced upon the Indian, lance in hand. The savage, however, contented himself with his good fortune, made off for the woods, just keeping an even pace before them, scoffing, making grimaces, and crying out, "Let us all fight on foot, and we shall then see who will prevail." With this taunt he took refuge among the thickets, leaving the cavaliers to mourn the loss of their gallant steeds.

Some few days after the misfortune of these two horsemen, Simon Rodriquez and Roque de Yelves, set out on horseback to gather some fruit that grew in a wood skirting the village. Not satisfied with plucking it from the lower branches, seated in their saddles, they climbed the tree to gather it from the topmost boughs, fancying it of better flavour. While thus employed, Roque de Yelves gave the alarm of Indians at hand, and throwing himself from the tree, ran to recover his horse; but an arrow, with a barb of flint, entered between his shoulders and came out at his breast; he fell forward and lay stretched upon the earth. Rodriquez was too much terrified to descend. They shot at him like a wild beast, and he fell dead, pierced by three arrows. Scarcely had he touched the ground when they scalped him and bore off the trophy in triumph. The arrival of his comrades saved the scalp of poor Roque de Yelves. He related the event in few words, and making confession, immediately expired. The horses of the slain Spaniards had fled towards the camp. Upon the thigh of one of them was perceived a drop of blood. He was taken to a farrier, who, seeing that the wound was no greater than that made by the puncture of a lancet, said there was nothing to cure. On the following morning the horse died. The Spaniards suspecting that he had been struck by an arrow, opened the body at the wound, and tracing it, found a shaft which had passed through the thigh and entrails, and lodged in the hollow of the breast. They were perfectly amazed at the result of the examination, for an arquebuse could scarcely have sent a ball so far.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1540. THE Governor remained five months in winter quarters ; and such was the fertility of the province of Apalachee, and the quantity of maize, beans, pompions and various other kinds of grain, pulse, and vegetables, besides a variety of fruits, that there was no need of foraging more than a league and a half round the village to find food in abundance, though the force consisted of fifteen hundred persons, including Indians, and above three hundred horses.

During this time, De Soto endeavoured to collect information respecting the interior of the country, that he might regulate his march in the spring. In the course of the winter two Indian lads, about sixteen years of age, were brought to him ; they were natives of distant provinces, and had travelled with Indian traders. They offered to guide him to those provinces : and one in particular spoke of a remote district towards the east, called Cofachiqui, governed by a female Cacique, whose capital was extensive, and who received tribute from all her neighbours. The Spaniards showed him jewels of gold, pieces of silver, and rings set with pearls and precious stones ; and endeavoured to ascertain if any such articles were to be found in Cofachiqui. He gave them no doubt vague and blundering replies, which they interpreted according to their wishes. Understanding him to say, that the chief traffic in that province was in those yellow and white metals,* and that pearls were to be found there in abundance, it was determined to march in search of Cofachiqui.

Accordingly, in the month of March 1540, Hernando de Soto broke up his winter cantonment, and proceeded to the north-east. Being apprised that he must travel many leagues through an unpeopled wilderness, the Governor ordered his men to provide themselves with provisions. The Indians they had captured and made slaves, being exposed naked, and in irons, to the severe cold, had nearly all perished, so that each soldier was obliged to carry his own supply of pro-

* The Portuguese historian asserts that the lad described the manner in which the gold was dug, melted and refined with such accuracy, that those who were experienced in mining, declared he must have witnessed the process.

visions. On the evening of the third day, after a toilsome march, they arrived at a small village called Capachiqui.* It was situated on high ground on a kind of peninsula, being nearly surrounded by a marsh more than a hundred paces broad, and traversed in various directions by wooden bridges. The village commanded an extensive view over a beautiful valley, sprinkled with small hamlets. Here the troops remained quartered for three days.

About noon on the second day, five halberdiers of the General's guard sallied from the village, accompanied by two other soldiers, Francisco de Aguilar and Andres Moreno. The latter was a gay, good-humoured fellow, and from frequently using the exclamation,—Angels! was nicknamed by his comrades, Angel Moreno. These boon companions, without orders from their superiors, went forth in a heedless manner, merely to amuse themselves, and survey the neighbouring hamlets. The five guards were armed with their halberts, Aguilar with his sword and shield, Moreno with a sword and lance. They crossed the morass, and a strip of thicket about twenty paces wide, beyond which was an open country with corn-fields.

Scarcely had they advanced two hundred paces, when the ever-watchful savages sprang upon them from their lurking places. The startling war-cries and shouts of both parties, roused the soldiers in the village. They did not stay to cross by the bridges, but dashed through the swamp where the water was up to their breasts, and rushed on to rescue their companions. It was too late; the Indians had disappeared; and the five halberdiers lay stretched lifeless upon the ground, each pierced with ten or twelve arrows. Moreno was yet alive, but transfixed with a shaft barbed with flint, and the moment it was extracted from his breast, he expired. Aguilar, who was a hardy soldier, more robust than his companions, had defended himself stoutly; he was alive though badly wounded and much battered about the head. The Indians, having exhausted all their arrows, had attacked him with their bows. With such might did they wield them, that Aguilar's shield was shivered in pieces, and his skull laid bare.

As his comrades bore him to the camp, they inquired the

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 13.

number of the enemy, which he declared to be more than fifty, giving the reason why his party had been so suddenly defeated. One day, having nearly recovered from his wounds, his comrades began to jeer him, asking him whether he had counted the blows he received, and if they had hurt much. "I counted not the number of the blows," replied Aguilar somewhat crustily, "but you may, one day or other, receive the like, and then you will know whether they hurt or not." Being further bantered upon the subject, he broke forth in testimony of the valour and generosity of the Indian warriors. "You must know," said he, "that a band of more than fifty savages sprang out of the thickets to attack us; the moment, however, they saw that we were but seven, and without our horses, seven warriors stepped forth and the rest retired to a distance. They began the attack, and as we had neither arquebusses nor cross-bows, we were entirely at their mercy. Being more active and swift of foot than our men, they leaped around us like so many devils, with horrid laughter, shooting us like wild beasts, without our being able to close with them. My poor comrades fell one after the other, and the savages seeing me alone, all seven assailed me with their bows and battered me as you witnessed. I concealed this before, through a sense of shame; but so it really happened, and may it serve as a warning to you all, never to disobey orders and go forth in a like careless manner."

Aguilar has probably given to this event a somewhat romantic colouring; yet, such instances of magnanimity are said to have been common among the warriors of Apalachee. They had great confidence in their own courage, strength, and dexterity, considering themselves equal if not superior to the Spaniards, when equally armed, and when the latter were not mounted on their horses:—at such times they would often disdain to avail themselves of their superiority of numbers.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1540. Quitting this village, within two days, the army crossed the frontier of Apalachee, and entered the province

of Atapaha.* On entering a new province, it was the custom of the Governor to lead the way himself, and see every thing with his own eyes, rather than trust to the accounts of others. He accordingly chose forty horse and seventy foot, well armed, with shields, arquebusses and cross-bows, and penetrated the country in advance of his army. On the morning of the third day they came in sight of the village of Achese. The Indians had fled to the forests, carrying with them their wives, children, and effects. The horsemen dashing into the village, made six prisoners, two of whom were warriors that had remained behind to remove the infirm.

These two warriors came into the presence of the Governor with a fearless and lofty demeanour. "What seek you in our land?" said they, not waiting to be questioned, "peace or war?" De Soto replied through his interpreter, Juan Ortiz, "We seek not war with any one, but our wish is to cultivate peace and friendship. We are in search of a distant province, and all we ask is food during our journey." The warriors instantly offered to supply the wants of the army. They sent two of their companions to their Cacique to relate all they had heard and seen, and charged them to inform all the natives they should meet, that the Spaniards came as friends, and were to be received and aided accordingly. On the departure of the three messengers, De Soto ordered the Indians to be set at liberty, and treated as friends.

De Soto, being joined by his army, halted three days in this village and then resumed his march to the north-east, proceeding for ten days along the banks of a river, skirted by groves of mulberry trees, and winding through luxuriantly fertile valleys.† The natives were peaceable and domestic in their habits, and never violated the peace which they formed with the Spaniards.

On the eleventh day the latter crossed the boundaries of Atapaha, and entered the province of Cofa,‡ having, accord-

* The river Atapaha may derive its name from this ancient province.

† Supposed to be the Flint river.

‡ We have followed the Portuguese Narrative here, as the Inca is evidently in error in making the Spaniards enter the Province of Achalague (the country of the Cherokees) at so early a period. This tribe dwelt much further to the northward, on the skirts of the Apalachian Mountains, and was not seen by the Spaniards until a month afterwards. The Portuguese historian calls this province Ocute.

ing to custom, dispatched messengers in advance to the Cacique with offers of peace. This chieftain, in reply, sent a deputation of two thousand Indians to De Soto, with a present of rabbits, partridges, maize, and a great number of dogs. The latter were held in high esteem by the Spaniards; for, next to their want of salt, the greatest cause of suffering was the scarcity of meat. Game was abundant, and amply supplied the natives with food, for they were very skilful in using the bow and arrow, and equally expert at constructing various kinds of traps. The Spaniards, however, being constantly on the march, had no time for hunting; and, moreover, dared not quit their ranks for fear of falling into some ambush of the enemy.

The Cacique of Cofa, received the Spaniards with a generous welcome, giving up his own mansion to the Governor, and providing quarters for the army. The province over which he ruled was fertile and populous. The natives were peaceful, domestic in their habits, and extremely courteous. They treated the strangers with much kindness, and entertained them five days with great hospitality.

The Adelantado had brought with him, thus far, a piece of ordnance, but finding it exceedingly burthensome and of little use, he determined to leave it with the Cacique. That the natives might have some idea of its use, he ordered it to be loaded, and pointed at a large oak without the village. In two shots the tree was laid prostrate, to the infinite amazement of the Cacique and his subjects.

De Soto told the Indians that he should leave this wonderful machine with them as a reward for their friendship and hospitality; to be taken care of until he should return or send for it. The Cacique and his warriors were deeply impressed with this mark of confidence, and promised that it should be guarded with vigilant care.

On the sixth day, the army resumed their march in quest of the adjoining province of Cofaqui, whose Cacique was an elder brother of Cofa's, and much more powerful. Cofa and his warriors escorted the army during one day's march, and would have continued with them to the frontier, but the Governor would not give his assent. The Cacique, having taken an affectionate leave of the strangers, ordered some of his people to accompany them, and do all in their power to

serve them. At the same time he directed a chief to go before, and warn his brother Cofaqui, of their approach, and beseech him to receive them kindly. The Adelantado continued his march through a pleasant and luxuriant country, fertilized by many rivers, and inhabited by a more docile and gentle race than any he had yet seen. At the end of six days he bid adieu to the territory of Cofa.*

The moment the Cacique Cofaqui received the message of his brother, he despatched four chieftains, with a train of Indians, to welcome the Spaniards to his dominions.

This message diffused joy throughout the whole army. They marched cheerfully forward, and soon came to the confines of Cofaqui, where they dismissed the subjects of Cofa. When the Cacique knew by his scouts that the Christians were near, he went out to receive them with a retinue of warriors, richly decorated, carrying their bows and arrows in their hands, wearing lofty plumes upon their heads, and over their shoulders rich mantles of martin skin, finely dressed. Many kind words were exchanged; the Indians and Spaniards unsuspectingly mingling together, entered the village with joyous shouts. The Cacique conducted the Governor to his own house, and retired himself to a neighbouring hamlet.

Early the next morning Cofaqui came to visit De Soto. He freely imparted every information respecting his own territory, and spoke of a plentiful and populous province, called Cosa, which lay to the north-west.† As to the province of Cofachiqui, he said it was contiguous to his dominions, but that a vast wilderness of seven days' journey intervened.‡ Should the Governor, however, persist in seeking it, he offered to send a band of his warriors to accompany him, and promised to furnish him with all necessary supplies for the journey. De Soto had fixed his mind too intently upon Cofachiqui to be diverted from his course, and signified his intention of continuing on. Scouts were accordingly sent out in every direction, to assemble the natives, and in four days the village was thronged with them. Four thousand warriors were selected to escort the Spaniards, and four thousand retainers to carry their supplies and clothing. The chief

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 13.

† Portuguese Relation, c. 14.

‡ Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 4.

articles of provisions were, maize, dried plums, grapes, walnuts, and acorns; for the Indians had no domestic animals, and depended for flesh upon the produce of the chase.

The Spaniards, seeing themselves surrounded by such a multitude of natives, although assembled for their service, kept unremitting watch day and night, lest, under the guise of friendship, they should attempt their destruction. But it soon appeared that these troops were destined for warfare in another quarter.

A few days before the time appointed for the departure of the Spaniards, the General and his officers being in the public square, the Cacique ordered his chief warrior to be called. "You well know," said he to him, "that a perpetual enmity has existed between our fathers and the Indians of Cofachiqui. That bitter hatred, you are aware, has not abated; the wrongs we have suffered from that vile tribe still rankle in our hearts, unrevenged! The present opportunity must not be lost.

"You, the leader of my warriors, must accompany this Chief, and under his protection wreak vengeance on our enemies! I need say no more; I leave our cause and our honour in your hands!"

The Indian leader, whose name was Patofa, was of a graceful form and striking features. His expression was haughty and noble, showing dauntless courage for war, and gentleness and kindness in peace. His whole demeanour showed that the Cacique had not unwisely bestowed his trust. Throwing aside his mantle of skin, and seizing a broadsword, made of palmwood, which a servant carried behind him, as a badge of his rank, he cut and thrust with it, as skilfully as a master of fence, much to the admiration of the Spaniards. After going through many singular evolutions, he stopped suddenly before the Cacique, and made a profound reverence. "I pledge my word," said he, "to fulfil your commands as far as may be in my power; and I promise, by the favour of these strangers, to revenge the insults, deaths, and losses our fathers have sustained from the natives of Cofachiqui. My vengeance will be such, that the memory of past evils shall be wiped away for ever. My daring to re-appear in your presence will be a token that your commands have been executed. For, should my hopes

be denied, never again shall you behold me,—never again shall the sun shine upon me ! If the enemy refuse me death, my own hand shall inflict it. I will execute upon myself the punishment which my cowardice or fortune may merit !”

The Cacique Cofaqui rose and embraced him. “I consider,” he replied, “that what you have promised is as certain to be done as though it were already accomplished, I therefore reward you, as for services already rendered.” Saying this, he took from his shoulders a mantle of beautiful martin skins, and placed it with his own hand, upon the shoulders of Patofa. A present of a mantle or plume, or any other article of dress, was considered by the natives of that country as the greatest honour their chief could confer upon them, more especially when presented in person.*

A singular event happened the night before the departure of the army. One of the two boys taken prisoner in the province of Apalachee, had guided them thus far. The other, whom they named Pedro, was now to conduct them to the dominions of Cofachiqui, where they expected to find gold, silver, and precious stones. About the mid-watch, this youth woke the soldiers with screams of murder, and cries for help. The alarm spread throughout the camp ; the Spaniards dreaded some treachery from the Indians ; the trumpets sounded to arms ; all was tumult ; the former buckled on their armour, seized their weapons, and prepared for action. When it was discovered that no enemy was at hand, an inquiry was made whence the alarm had proceeded. The Indian boy Pedro, half dead, trembling with fear and terror, and foaming at the mouth like a maniac, when asked why he had called for help with such strange outcries, declared that a demon with a horrible visage, accompanied by frightful imps, had appeared to him, and forbidden him, under pain of death, to guide the Spaniards to the land he had promised ; at the same time dragging him out of his hut and beating him, until he was so bruised and weakened that he could not move. He added, that the demon, seeing the Christians approach, had vanished, together with his imps ; —he knew, therefore, from this, that the devils feared the Christians, and begged they would baptize him immediately, lest the demon should return and kill him.”

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 5.

The Spaniards were perplexed by this story, which seemed to be corroborated by the contusions and swellings on the boy's face and body. The priests, being called in, baptized him, and remained with him during this night and the following day, to confirm him in the faith.* As the boy proved to be an elaborate liar on various occasions, the foregoing tale may be considered a marvel of his own invention. The Cacique accompanied the army two leagues on their march, when charging Patofa anew, faithfully to serve the Spaniards, he took an affectionate leave and returned to his home.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1540. THE Spaniards marched, formed into squadrons, with a van and rear-guard. Patofa and his four thousand warriors marched in like order, the Indians who carried the provisions being in the centre; for the natives sought eagerly to rival the white men in every thing relating to the art of war.

By night, they lodged separately, and as soon as the Indians who carried the provisions had delivered them to their allies, they went away and slept with their companions. Both armies posted sentinels, and watched each other as though they had been enemies. The Spaniards were particularly vigilant; for, seeing the order and regularity observed by the Indians, they mistrusted them. The latter, however, were entirely free from any evil designs; on the contrary, they manifested a desire to please the strangers in every thing. The stationing of sentinels and the observance of other camp forms, were intended more to show that they were accustomed to war, than from any doubts of the Spaniards. These precautions were observed by both parties the whole time they were together. The second night of their march, they encamped on the borders of an extensive uninhabited tract, lying between the provinces of Cofaqui and Cofachiqui.

The country upon which they now entered, though deserted, was pleasantly diversified with easy hills, open forests, and numerous streams.

On the fourth day an Indian deserted, and took the

* The Portuguese narrator says the gospel was read over him and he recovered.

direction for his home. Patofa immediately sent four young warriors in pursuit of him, with orders to bring him back manacled. These set off with the swiftness of deer, and soon returned with their prisoner. Patofa ordered him to be led to the banks of a small stream that flowed through the encampment. Here he was stripped and commanded to throw himself upon the ground and drink the streamlet dry. The culprit drank until he could contain no more, but the moment he raised his head from the water, five Indians who were placed over him, with clubs in their hands, belaboured him cruelly until he resumed his task. Some of his comrades hastened to the Governor, and implored him to intercede with Patofa, or the poor wretch would be compelled to drink until he died. The intercessions of the Governor prevailed; the prisoner was released, but was half dead with the quantity of water he had been forced to swallow.

In the course of their march through this unpeopled tract, they came to two rivers, a cross-bow shot broad, and so deep and rapid that the infantry could not maintain their footing in crossing. They made, therefore, a kind of dam by placing their horses side by side across the stream, in order to break its fury, until the foot soldiers and Indians had forded it.

About noon on the seventh day, their march was arrested, and the whole army thrown into confusion by the sudden termination of the broad road which they had followed thus far. They pursued many narrow winding paths leading into thick and tangled forests, but these paths, after being followed for a short distance, likewise entirely disappeared.

Their native allies were here quite as much at a loss, not one of them being able to point out the proper track. De Soto then ordered Patofa into his presence. "Why," said he to him, "have you, under the mask of friendship, led us into this wilderness, from whence we can discover no way of extricating ourselves? I will never believe, that among eight thousand Indians, there is not one to be found capable of showing us the way to Cofachiqui. It is not at all likely that you, who have maintained perpetual war with that tribe, should know nothing of the public road and secret paths leading from one village to another."

Patofa replied to this by assurances that neither he nor

any of his followers had ever visited this district before. "The wars," said he, "which have been waged between the two provinces, have not been carried on by pitched battles, nor invasions of either party; but by skirmishes between small bands, who resort to the streams and rivers we have crossed, to fish; and also by combats between hunting parties; as the wilderness we have traversed is the hunting ground common to both nations. The natives of Cofachiqui are more powerful and have always worsted us in fight; our people, therefore, were dispirited and dared not pass over their own frontiers. Do you suspect that I have led your army into these deserts that you may perish? If so, demand what hostages you please. If my head will suffice, take it—if not, you may behead every Indian, as they will all obey my mandate even to death."*

The frank and feeling manner in which these words were delivered, convinced the Governor of Patofa's truth. He then called to him Pedro, the Indian boy who had guided them thus far, with such a perfect knowledge of the country, that the previous evening he had pointed out exactly where they would find the road on the following morning. De Soto threatened to throw him to the dogs for thus deceiving him. The poor boy, however, appeared to be really bewildered, and seemed to have suddenly lost all his former sagacity; he said it was four or five years since he had travelled through the wilderness, and could not now tell where they were.

Resuming their march, they wandered through the glades and openings of the forests, and at sun-set were arrested by a wide, deep, and unfordable river. This sight filled them with dismay. They had neither rafts nor canoes with which to cross the stream, nor food to keep them alive, while these should be constructed. Their provisions were consumed, as they had only brought supplies for seven days, which it had been computed they would take to traverse the desert. The road lost, without a guide, without food, before them a deep impassable river, behind them an uninhabitable wilderness, and on each side a trackless forest;—their situation was indeed dreary and disheartening.

1540. The Governor leaving the army encamped in a

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 3. c. 6.

grove of pine trees, took a guide and a detachment of horse and foot, and struck into the depths of the forest. He returned late in the evening, greatly perplexed, having penetrated five or six leagues into the wilderness, without discovering any signs that the country was inhabited.

Early the next morning, he called a council of his officers, to consider the critical situation of the army, and decide whether they should turn in another direction or retrace their steps. Their supplies of maize were exhausted; both horses and riders were way-worn, dispirited, and enfeebled for want of food, and it was extremely doubtful whether the troops would be able to reach a place of refreshment; moreover, the Indians, taking advantage of their weakened condition, might assail them; so that their return would probably be in the face both of war and famine. It was resolved, therefore, not to move their camp, until some road or outlet from this wilderness should be discovered. The Governor then despatched parties of troopers in every direction, to seek for habitations. These returned at night-fall, some leading their wearied horses by the bridle, others driving them before them, having discovered neither road nor human dwelling.* De Soto then ordered four bands of horse and two of foot to start, two up the course of the river, and two down it; one party keeping along the bank, and the other a league inland, in hopes that one or the other would find a road or an inhabited place. He directed each of the captains to return in five days.

Captain Juan de Añasco, commanding one of the detachments, was accompanied by Patofa, and the Indian boy Pedro; the former being unwilling to remain in the camp, and the latter abashed at having lost the track, thought that by going on this expedition he might succeed in redeeming his character. With each company of Spaniards went a thousand Indian warriors who scattered themselves about the forests in search of a road.

The Governor awaited their return on the river bank, where he and his troops suffered great distress for want of food; having little to eat except the tendrils of wild vines, which they found in the woods. The four thousand Indians who remained with him sallied out every morning and

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 14.

returned at night, some with herbs and roots that were eatable, some with fish, and others with birds and small animals which they had killed with their bows and arrows. All these they brought to the army; although they were exhausted and almost famished themselves, yet such was their fidelity and respect, that they tasted nothing until they had first presented the fruits of their chase to the Spaniards. The hardy soldiers were touched by this generosity of spirit, and gave them the greater part of the food they brought. These supplies, however, were by no means sufficient for the subsistence of such a multitude.

During three days the army suffered extreme privations. The Governor finding they could no longer endure this excess of hunger, ordered some of the hogs brought for the breed to be killed, and half a pound of meat was portioned out to each Spaniard. This, however, rather served to augment than allay the hunger of half-famished men; yet notwithstanding their pressing wants, they generously divided their pittance with the poor savages, whose necessities were equally great.

De Soto fared precisely the same as his men; and though anxious for the fate of his great expedition, he wore a sunny countenance in order to cheer his followers. These chivalrous spirits appreciated his kindness, and to solace him, concealed their sufferings, assumed an air of contentedness, and appeared as happy as though they had been revelling in abundance.

Meanwhile, the four captains who went in search of a road, suffered no less from hunger than the Governor and his army. Juan de Añasco having travelled three days along the river, came to a small village on its banks.* Here he found few natives, but a great supply of food; in one house alone were deposited five hundred measures of meal, formed from toasted maize, besides a considerable quantity of grain. The joy both of Indians and Spaniards may easily be imagined. After having searched the houses, they ascended to the roof of the highest, from which they could see that further on the country was studded with villages and hamlets, surrounded by extensive corn-fields. When they

* The Portuguese Narrator says, the Indians called this hamlet Ay-may;—the Spaniards gave it the name of the “Village of Good Relief.”

had subdued the cravings of hunger, shortly after midnight they despatched four horsemen to the Governor with tidings of their success. These took with them many ears of corn, and horns of the buffalo or bison. The sight of these latter perplexed the Spaniards, who conjectured them to be the horns of tame cattle. Several times in the course of their expedition, they had found fresh beef, and importuned the Indians to tell them where they kept their herds, but not being able to obtain any satisfactory information on the subject, it was naturally conjectured that they purposely concealed the truth.

This night Patofa and his warriors stole stealthily out of the camp, so as not to alarm the Spaniards, sacked and pillaged the temple, massacred every Indian they found within the village and its neighbourhood, sparing neither sex nor age, and taking their scalps as trophies to show their Cacique, Cofaqui; for it was afterwards discovered that this village was in the long wished for province of Cofachiqui.

On the following day at noon, Añasco set forward to meet the Governor, not daring to await his arrival in the village, fearing a general assault from the natives, in revenge of the massacre of Patofa.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1540. THE four horsemen who had been sent as messengers, proceeded on at a rapid pace, and reached the army in one day; having performed a distance of twelve leagues, which they had previously spent three days in travelling. The news they brought diffused new life among the troops, rendering them as wild with joy as if they had been rescued from the jaws of death. When morning dawned, De Soto ordered the four troopers to lead the way to the village they had discovered. Before he decamped, however, he buried a letter at the root of a tree, upon the bark of which he inscribed the following words: "Dig at the root of this pine, and you will find a letter." This was to make known to the other captains, who were seeking a road, the direction the army had taken.*

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 14.

The idea of a plentiful supply of food so revived the half-famished troops that they spurred their horses through the forest, each striving to pass the other, and before noon on the following day they were all within the village. Here the Governor determined to halt for some days, that his men might recruit after their late privations and fatigue, and likewise await the arrival of the three Captains, who had been sent in search of a path.

These three Captains had the good fortune to find the letter of their comrades, and in the course of four days rejoined the main body with their different detachments almost famished: having, during more than a week's absence, had nothing to eat but a scanty supply of roots and herbs.

De Soto remained seven days in this frontier village of the province of Cofachiqui; during this time Patofa and his warriors were not idle, but sallying forth stealthily ravaged the country for leagues round, slaying and scalping man, woman, and child, sacking and pillaging villages and hamlets, temples and sepulchres, and refraining only from setting fire to them, through fear that the flames might betray their actions to the Spaniards.

When De Soto heard of this cruel ravage, he made all haste to get rid of his sanguinary allies. Sending for Patofa, he thanked him for his friendly conduct and valuable escort; and loading him with presents of knives, trinkets, and clothing for himself and his Cacique, dismissed him and his followers.

The savage warrior set off on his return, well pleased with the presents, but still more gratified at having fulfilled the vow of vengeance which he had made to his Chieftain.

Two days after the departure of Patofa, the Spaniards resumed their march along the banks of the river. They met with no living thing, but witnessed many dismal proofs of the dreadful carnage which Patofa had committed. For miles the ground was strewn with the scalpless corpses of the slain. The natives had fled into the interior leaving a plentiful supply of provisions in the villages.

On the afternoon of the third day, the army halted in a verdant region, covered with mulberry and other fruit trees, laden with fruit. The Governor, unwilling to advance until he had ascertained what province he was in, ordered Juan de

Añasco with thirty foot soldiers, to pursue the road which they had followed thus far, and endeavour to capture some Indians from whom they might obtain some information, and who would serve as guides. In order to encourage Añasco, he declared that he sent him in preference to any other person, because he was always successful.

Añasco and his thirty comrades quitted the camp on foot before night-fall. They marched forward in profound silence, with the noiseless pace and watchful eye of a marauding party. As they advanced the road became wider. They had proceeded nearly two leagues without seeing a living thing, when on the still night-breeze was borne a low, murmuring sound, like the near hum of a village. As they moved forward, the sounds grew more distinct. At length emerging from the thickets which had obstructed their view, they saw lights and heard the barking of dogs, the cries of children, together with the voices of men and women. Satisfied that a village was near, they advanced in silence to seize some Indians secretly in the suburbs, each striving to be first, in order that he might have the honour of being considered the most diligent. They were, however, disappointed in their hopes, the river which they had followed flowing between them and the village. Walking for some time on the opposite bank, at what appeared to be a landing place for canoes, after having supped, and reposed until two o'clock at night, they set off for the camp, and arriving a little before day-break, related to the Governor what they had seen and heard.

When the day dawned, De Soto set out with a hundred horse to reconnoitre the village. Having reached the opposite bank, Juan Ortiz and Pedro, the Indian boy, shouted to the natives to come over and receive a message for their Cacique.

The Indians, terrified at the strange sight of the Spaniards and their horses, ran back to the village to report what they had seen. In a little while a large canoe was launched, and bent her course directly across the river, managed by several rowers. Six Indians of noble appearance and from forty to fifty years of age landed from it.

The Governor, perceiving they were persons of consequence, received them with much ceremony, seated in a kind of chair of state, which he always carried with him for occa-

sions of this kind. As the Indians advanced, they made three profound reverences, one to the sun, with their faces eastward, the second to the moon turning westward, and the third to the Governor. They then asked him the usual question, "whether he came for peace or war?" He replied, "Peace; and a free passage through your lands." He moreover requested provisions for his people, and canoes or rafts to assist him and his army in passing the river.

The messengers answered that their supplies were small, the country having been ravaged by pestilence during the preceding year;—that most of the people had therefore abandoned their houses and villages, and taken refuge in the woods, neglecting to sow their corn, adding that they were governed by a young female, just of marriageable age, who had recently inherited the sovereignty. To her they engaged to return and repeat the circumstances of their interview, assuring the Spaniards they made no doubt, that from her discreet and generous nature, she would do every thing in her power to serve them. With these words they departed.

The Indians had not long returned to the village, when the Spaniards perceived movements of preparation, and observed a kind of litter borne by four men to the water's side. From this alighted the female Cacique, and entered a highly decorated canoe, which had been prepared for her reception. A kind of aquatic procession was then formed; a grand canoe, containing the six ambassadors, and paddled by a large number of natives, led the van, towing after it the state bark of the Princess, who reclined on cushions in the stern, under a canopy supported by a lance. She was accompanied by eight female attendants. A number of canoes filled with warriors closed the procession.*

The young Princess stepped on shore, and as she approached the Spaniards, they were struck with her appearance. She was finely formed, possessing great beauty of countenance, and exhibiting considerable grace and dignity. Having made her obeisance to the Governor, she took her seat on a kind of stool placed by her attendants, and entered

* The account of this Princess and her territory is taken from the Spanish and Portuguese account. The former is by far the most ample and circumstantial; though it evidently magnifies the importance both of the Princess and her dominions.

into conversation with him;—all her subjects preserving a most respectful silence.

Her conversation confirmed the previous reports of the ambassadors. Her province had been ravaged by pestilence, during the preceding year, and provisions were very scarce. She offered, however, to share with the strangers a quantity of maize which had been collected for the relief of her village, and to put them in the way of getting similar supplies from other villages. She offered, likewise, her own house for the Governor's accommodation, and half of the village for that of his officers and principal soldiers; undertaking that wigwams of bark and branches should be put up for the rest. She added, that rafts and canoes should be provided for the army to cross the river on the following day. De Soto being extremely gratified by her generosity, endeavoured in the best manner he could, to express his sense of her kind and hospitable offers, assuring her of the constant friendship of his sovereign and himself. The cavaliers, too, listening with admiring attention to her discourse, and the answers she gave to various inquiries concerning her province, were as much charmed with her intelligence and judgment as they had been with her beauty. They were surprised to find such natural dignity, grace, and true politeness in a savage brought up in a wilderness.

While the Princess of Cofachiqui was conversing with the Governor, she was slowly disengaging a string of large pearls, which passed three times round her neck, and descended to her waist. The conference ended, she requested Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, to present the necklace to the General. Ortiz replied, that the gift would be more valuable if presented with her own hand. This she scrupled to do from a dread of infringing the decorum, which women, especially sovereigns, ought never to violate. When De Soto was apprised of her scruples, he directed Ortiz to tell her, that he should more highly prize the favour of receiving the gift from her own hand, than he would value the jewel itself, and that she would commit no breach of decorum, as they were persons unknown to each other, treating of peace and amity.*

This being interpreted to the Princess, she arose, and

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 14. Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 11.

placed the string of pearls about the neck of De Soto;* he likewise stood up; and taking from his finger a ring of gold, set with a fine ruby, presented it to her, as a token of friendship. She received it very respectfully and placed it upon one of her fingers. This ceremony ended, she returned to her capital, leaving the Spaniards much struck with her native talent, and personal beauty.†

CHAPTER XXX.

1540. ON the following day, the Indians having constructed large rafts, and brought a number of canoes, the Christian army crossed the river. The passage was not, however, effected without accident. Several of the horses, urged by their riders into the stream, were carried by the current amid quicksands and whirlpools, and four of them unfortunately drowned. Their loss was as much lamented by the Spaniards, as though they had been brothers in arms.

When the army had all crossed, they were lodged in wigwams, under the shade of luxuriant mulberry trees, with which the province abounded. Around the village were scattered many forsaken wigwams; the rank grass growing within, as if they had long been untenanted—a token that the pestilence had, indeed, passed over them.

The province of Cofachiqui, as well as the neighbouring provinces of Cofaqui, and Cofa, are represented as being extremely populous and fertile. The natives were of a tawny complexion; well formed; frank, gentle, and sincere in their dispositions, and less warlike than any of the tribes among which the Spaniards had sojourned.

They were at war, however, with their neighbours, and had many captives among them, whom they employed in cultivating the fields and in other servile labours. To prevent the escape of these captives, they were maimed by having the sinews of the leg cut above the heel or the instep.

* According to the Portuguese narrator, the Indians in this interview assured the Spaniards that their province was but two days' journey from the sea-coast; but subsequent circumstances gave reason to believe, either that the information was incorrect in itself, or erroneously rendered by the interpreters.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. L. 2. c. 27.

In the course of his various enquiries about the affairs of the province, De Soto learnt that the mother of the Princess, a widow, was still living, at a retired place about twelve leagues down the river. He felt a strong desire to see her, wishing thoroughly to secure the friendship of the people; but his desire was probably quickened by learning that the queen-mother had in her possession a large quantity of pearls.

On making known his wishes to the Princess, she immediately despatched twelve of her principal subjects to her mother, to entreat the latter to come and behold the wonderful strangers, and the extraordinary animals they had brought with them.

The queen-mother, however, refused to accompany the messengers, and expressed herself scandalized at what she termed the levity of her daughter, in so readily holding intercourse with persons whom she had never before seen. She rebuked the envoys for having permitted such a departure from her proper dignity; and manifested in various ways the vexation which stately dowagers are somewhat prone to indulge in similar cases.

The Governor hearing this, summoned Juan de Añasco, who was the very man for undertakings of this kind, ordered him to assemble thirty companions, depart for the retreat of this coy widow, and by fair but gentle means prevail upon her to come to the encampment.

Juan de Añasco and his comrades set off at once, on foot, although the morning was already somewhat advanced. They were guided by a youthful warrior, whom the Princess had commanded to accompany them. This youth was a near relative to the widow, and had been reared by her, and being kind and noble in his nature, she was as dear to him as though he were her own son. For this reason her daughter had chosen him to go with the Spaniards, and had instructed him to proceed in advance of them when they approached the residence of her mother, in order to secure for them a favourable reception.

He showed his generous blood in countenance and bearing. He was about twenty-one years of age; with handsome features, a vigorous and graceful form. His head was decorated with lofty plumes of different coloured feathers;

he wore a mantle of dressed deer-skin; in his hand he bore a beautiful bow, so highly varnished as to appear as if finely enamelled, and at his shoulder hung a quiver full of arrows. With a light and elastic step, an animated and gallant air, his whole appearance was that of an ambassador, worthy of the young and beautiful Princess whom he served.

Juan de Añasco and his comrades having proceeded nearly three leagues, as the heat was oppressive, stopped to make their mid-day meal and take their repose beneath the shade of some widely spreading trees. The Indian guide had proved a cheerful and joyous companion, entertaining them all the way with accounts of the surrounding country and the adjacent provinces. On a sudden, after they had halted, he became moody and thoughtful, and leaning his cheek upon his hand, fell into a reverie, uttering repeated and deep-drawn sighs. The Spaniards noticed his dejection, but, fearing to increase it, forbore to ask the cause.

After a while he quietly took off his quiver, and placing it before him, drew out the arrows slowly, one by one. They were admirable for the skill and elegance with which they were formed. The shafts were reeds. Some were tipped with buck's horn, wrought with four corners like a diamond; some were pointed with the bones of fishes, curiously fashioned; others had barbs of the palm and other hard woods; and some were three pronged. They were feathered in a triangular manner, to render their flight more accurate.

The Spaniards could not sufficiently admire their beauty; they took them up, and passed them from hand to hand, examining and praising the workmanship, and extolling the skill of their owner. The youthful Indian continued thoughtfully emptying his quiver, until, almost the last, he drew forth an arrow with a point of flint, long and sharp, and shaped like a dagger; then, casting round a glance, and seeing the Spaniards engaged in admiring his shafts, he suddenly plunged the weapon into his throat, and fell dead upon the spot.

Shocked at the circumstance, and grieved at not having been able to prevent it, the Spaniards called to their native attendants, and demanded the reason of this melancholy act, in one who had just before been so joyous.

The Indians broke into loud lamentations over the corpse;

for the youth was tenderly beloved by them, and they knew the grief his untimely fate would cause to both Princesses. They could only account for his self-destruction by supposing him perplexed and afflicted about his embassy. He knew that his errand would be disagreeable to the mother, and apprehended that the plan of the Spaniards was to carry her off. He alone was acquainted with the place of her concealment, and it appeared to his generous mind an unworthy return for her love and confidence to betray her to strangers. On the other hand he was aware that, should he disobey the mandates of his young mistress, he should lose her favour and fall into disgrace. Either of these alternatives would be worse than death; he had chosen the latter, therefore, as the lesser evil, and as leaving a proof to his mistresses of his loyalty and devotion.

Such was the conjecture of the natives, to which the Spaniards were inclined to give faith. Grieving at the death of the high-minded youth, they mournfully resumed their journey.

They now, however, found themselves at a loss respecting the road. None of the Indians knew in what part of the country the widow was concealed, the young guide who had killed himself being alone master of the secret. For the rest of that day and until the following noon, they made a fruitless search, taking some of the natives prisoners, who all professed utter ignorance on the subject. Juan de Añasco, being a fleshy man and somewhat choleric, was almost in a fever with vexation, which was increased by the weight of his armour, and the heat of the day; he was obliged, however, to give up his quest after the widow, and return to the camp, much mortified at having for once failed in an enterprize.

Three days after his return, an Indian offered to guide the Spaniards by water, to the retreat of the Princess. Añasco accordingly set out a second time with twenty companions, in two canoes; but at the end of six days returned with no better success. The old Princess having heard of the search made after her, had taken refuge in the depths of a forest which they found it impossible to penetrate. The Governor, therefore, gave up all further attempt to obtain an interview with this wary and discreet matron.

CHAPTER XXXI.

1540. While Juan de Añasco was employed in his search after the widow, the Governor endeavoured to inform himself respecting the riches of the province. For this purpose he summoned the two Indian lads, who had formerly accompanied traders into this part of the country : they told him that their masters had trafficked here for yellow and white metal, similar to the gold and silver shown by the Spaniards, and also for pearls. He made these youths describe the articles to the Princess, and begged her, if such yellow and white metals existed in her territories, to order that specimens should be immediately brought to him.

The Princess cheerfully complied, and in a little while several Indians appeared, laden with the supposed treasure. To the great disappointment of the Spaniards, however, the yellow metal proved to be a species of copper of a yellowish tint much resembling gold ; and the white metal, though a shining substance, having somewhat the appearance of silver, was extremely light, and crumbled in the hand like dry earth. Some have supposed it was a species of quartz, but it is probable that it was mica. Thus of a sudden vanished the golden treasures of Cofachiqui.

To console the Spaniards under their evident disappointment, the Princess pointed out a kind of temple or mausoleum at one end of the village, informing them that it was the sepulchre of all the chieftains and eminent warriors of the place, and adorned with great quantities of pearls. She further assured them that at another village, called Talomeco, about a league distant, the ancient capital of her territory, was a larger mausoleum, in which all her ancestors were interred. There still greater quantities of pearls were deposited, all which, she assured the Governor, should be entirely at his disposal.

De Soto was in some degree consoled for his disappointment in not finding gold, by the assurance of these immense hoards of pearls ; though many of his followers did not give up their hopes of eventual success, insisting that there were veins of that precious metal in the copper and brass of the country. They were destitute, however, of aquafortis, or touchstones to assay them.

Juan de Añasco, the Contador, or royal accountant of the expedition, being absent, the Governor deferred visiting the temple until he should be present in his official capacity. In the mean time, he placed trusty persons round the edifice to keep watch by day and night.

As soon as Añasco returned, the Governor visited the mausoleum at Talomeco, accompanied by the officers of the royal revenue, and a number of his principal officers and soldiers. It was a hundred paces in length and forty in breadth, being covered with a lofty roof of reed. At the entrance to this temple were gigantic statues of wood carved with considerable skill, the largest being twelve feet high. They were armed with various weapons, and stood in threatening attitudes, having grim and ferocious countenances. The interior of the temple was likewise decorated with statues of various shapes and sizes, and with a great profusion of conches, and different kinds of sea and river shells.

Around the sepulchre were benches on which were wooden chests skilfully wrought, but without locks or hinges. These contained the bodies of the departed Caciques and chieftains of Cofachiqui, left to the natural process of decay;—for these edifices were merely used as charnel houses. Besides the chests, there were baskets wrought of cane, filled with furs and Indian robes of dressed skins, and mantles made of the inner rind and bark of trees, and others of a species of grass, which, when beaten, resembled flax. There were some formed with feathers of various colours worn by the natives during winter. But above all, the baskets contained pearls of every size, and in incredible quantities, together with figures of children and birds entirely composed of them. The Portuguese historian says they obtained fourteen bushels of these gems, and that the female Cacique assured them, that, if they searched the neighbouring villages, they might find enough to load all the horses of the army. Nor is the Inca less extravagant in his account. All this, however, must be taken with a large deduction for those exaggerations with which the riches of the new world were always described by its discoverers, when beyond the reach of proof.

The Intendants of the revenue would have made general spoil of these precious articles had not De Soto interfered. He represented that they were at present merely discovering

the country, not dividing it, and having to make their way through a vast wilderness, it would not do to burthen themselves with treasure. They should, therefore, only take specimens of these riches to send to Havana, and leave every thing in the temples in their present state until they came to colonize, when all should be properly divided, and a fifth of the amount set apart for the crown. He, however, distributed handfuls of large pearls among his officers, exhorting them to make rosaries of them; and permitted the officers of the crown to retain a considerable quantity which they had already weighed out.

Annexed to the principal sepulchre were several buildings, which served as armories, containing weapons of various kinds, all arranged in great order. The whole establishment was maintained with exact care and evidently under the charge of numerous attendants.

While ransacking these depositories of arms, to their astonishment, the Spaniards found a dagger and several coats of mail. Nothing could equal their surprise at meeting with these European reliques in the heart of this unknown wilderness. They questioned the Indians on the subject, who informed them that many years before a number of white men, like themselves, had landed at a seaport, about two days' journey from thence;—that the commander of the party dying soon after he had landed, factions and brawls immediately took place among the followers for the command, in which several were slain;—that the survivors having reassembled on board their vessel, put to sea and quitted the country.*

The Spaniards pondered over these facts and concluded that the white men in question must have been the unfortunate Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, and his ill-fated followers; and those who were experienced in maritime affairs gave it as their opinion, that, from the course of the river which

* “We found in the town a dagger and some coats of mail; whereupon the *Indians* told us that many years before, the Christians had landed in a port, two days' journey from thence, (this was certainly *Ayllan*, who undertook the conquest of *Florida*,) that the Governor died upon his landing, which had occasioned great factions, divisions, and slaughter among the chief gentlemen who had followed him, every one aspiring to the supreme command: so that at length they left the port, and returned to *Spain*, without discovering the country.”—Portuguese Narrative, c. 14. London, 1686.

passed from Cofachiqui, it must be the same which on the sea-coast was called St. Helena.*

Elated with the riches they had found, the Spaniards besought the Governor to fix a colony there, urging that as the country was fertile, they might establish a lucrative pearl fishery, and carry on a trade with Spain from the seaport at the mouth of the river.

De Soto persisted, however, in his original plan of making an exploring tour, and of meeting Maldonado at the port of Achusi, according to appointment. He observed that the surrounding country would not afford provisions for a month,—that it would always be open for them to return to in case they should find none richer, and that, in the mean time, the Indians would sow their land with maize in greater plenty.

After a long stay, therefore, in this fertile and opulent province, De Soto prepared for his departure. During the time he remained here several broils took place between his people and the natives. These had originated in the ill conduct of some of the low and base-minded of the soldiery;—probably in their rapacious eagerness for gain. They had produced a general ill-will among the natives toward themselves and their countrymen generally, as well as a change in the feelings of the young Princess; who, instead of evincing her usual kindness, grew cold in her conduct, and appeared to eye the Spaniards with great distrust. De Soto remarked this change, and received private intelligence, that she was about to fly and leave him without guides for his march, or porters to convey the baggage of his army. As his route would lie through various tracts of country under the dominion of this female Cacique, any hostility on her part, or that of her subjects could not but prove extremely embarrassing. He, therefore, determined to adopt a precaution, which he had more than once practised in the course of his expedition, and which the Spaniards had found so efficacious in their Mexican and Peruvian conquests; this was to secure the sovereign's person by way of ensuring the peaceful conduct of her people.

* “El rio caudaloso, que pasava por Cofachiqui, decian los hombres Marineros, que entre estos Espanoles iban, que era el que en la costa, llamavan de Santa Elena, no porque lo supiesen de cierto, sino que, segun su viage, les paracia que era el. Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 3. c. 18.”

Accordingly, he placed a guard round the Princess, and signified to her, that she was to accompany him in his march; but while he thus detained her as a hostage, he took care that she should be attended with the respect and ceremony due to her rank. The policy of this measure was apparent in the cessation of all brawls between Spaniards and Indians; and in the good treatment which De Soto's army experienced during its subsequent march through the territories of his royal captive.

NOTE.—In detailing the march of the Spaniards, in search of Cofachiqui, we have, as usual, availed ourselves both of the Spanish and Portuguese narratives, reconciling them as far as possible, and exercising our own judgment where they vary from each other. Nothing is more perplexing than to define the route in conformity with modern landmarks. The discovery of the coats of mail and dagger, the reliques of the unfortunate Ayllon and his comrades, throws an unexpected light upon one part of the route, and shows that the province of Cofachiqui was at no very great distance from the sea-coast of Georgia, or South Carolina; though it could not have been within two days' journey, as the Portuguese narrator intimates. The armour and weapons of Ayllon and his followers had probably been divided among the savages, and carried as trophies into the interior. The river which passed by Cofachiqui, and which the Spaniards supposed to be the St. Helena, has been variously conjectured to be the Ocone, the Ogeeghee and the Savannah. As to the vast quantities of pearls found in the temples, and said to abound in the villages, they surpass belief; yet, both the Spanish and Portuguese writers are very positive and circumstantial in their account of them.

CHAPTER XXXII.

1540. ON the third of May, 1540, De Soto again set forward on his adventurous journey, taking with him the beautiful Princess of Cofachiqui and her train.* His route now lay towards the north or north-west, in the direction of the province of Cosa, which was said to be at the distance of twelve days' journey. As the country through which the troops were to march, was represented as being destitute of provisions, Gonzalo Silvestre and two other cavaliers were detached with a large body of horse and foot to a village,

* The captivity of this Princess is given on the authority of the Portuguese historian. The Inca, Garcilaso de la Vega, makes no mention of it. The former intimates that she was treated with neglect; but this is contrary to the general conduct of De Soto towards the Caciques whom he detained as hostages.

twelve leagues off, where there was a large deposit of grain, with which they had orders to load themselves, and rejoin the main army.

Silvestre and his companions, having successfully executed these orders, took as much maize as they could carry, and hastened back to the army, but were five days before they could succeed in coming upon its traces. When they did so, they found that the troops, having continued their march, were a considerable distance in advance. Here some difficulties occurred. The foot soldiers were eager to press forward, but the troopers demurred. Three of their horses were lame, and it would not do to leave any of these valuable animals behind, for they were considered the sinews of the army, not merely on account of their real services, but from the extreme dread with which they inspired the savages.

A mutinous spirit showed itself for a while among the infantry, who dreading a separation from the main force, set forward in a tumultuous manner. Their captains, however, threw themselves before them, and with difficulty compelled them to continue with the cavalry, who were obliged to proceed at a slow pace, proportioned to the condition of the maimed horses.

On the following day, as they were marching under the heat of a noon-tide sun, there suddenly arose a violent hurricane, accompanied with tremendous thunder, lightning, and hail of such size as to wound whatever it struck. The Spaniards sheltered themselves under their bucklers, or took refuge beneath some large trees which happened to be at hand. Fortunately, the hurricane was as brief as it was violent; yet the soldiers were so severely bruised by the hail-stones, that they remained encamped for the remainder of that and the ensuing day.

Resuming their march on the morning of the third day, they passed through various deserted hamlets, and at length crossed the frontiers of a province called Xuala, where, to their great joy, they found the Adelantado and his troops encamped in a beautiful valley, awaiting their arrival.

In the course of his march, De Soto had traversed the province of Achalague,* the most wretched country, says

* Spelt Chalague in the Portuguese narration. Supposed to be the barren country of the Cherokees.

the Portuguese narrator, in all Florida. The inhabitants were a feeble, peaceful race, nearly naked. They lived principally on herbs, roots, and wild fowl, which they killed with their arrows. Their Cacique brought the Governor two deer-skins, which he seemed to think a considerable present. Wild hens abounded in such quantities, that in one village the inhabitants brought seven hundred into the Spanish camp.* Most of the inhabitants of this miserable province fled to the woods on the Spaniards' approach, leaving few inhabitants in their villages, except the old, blind, and infirm.

The army remained several days in Xuala, to recruit the horses.† Their principal village, bearing the same name as the province, was situated on the skirts of a mountain, with a small but rapid river flowing by it. Here the Spaniards found maize in abundance, as well as different kinds of fruits and vegetables common to the country.

This place was under the domination of the youthful Princess of Cofachiqui; and here, as everywhere else along the route, the Spaniards found the advantage of having her with them. She was always treated with great reverence by the inhabitants of the villages, who, at her command, furnished the army with provisions, and with porters to carry the baggage. And here it is proper to observe that De Soto endeavoured, on all occasions, as far as his means permitted, to requite the kindness of the natives; making presents to such of the chieftains as treated him amicably, and leaving with each a couple of swine, male and female, from which to raise a future stock.

On leaving Xuala, a number of the inhabitants accompanied the Spaniards, laden with provisions. The first day's march was through a country covered with fields of maize of luxuriant growth. De Soto had directed his march to the westward, in search of a province called Quaxale, where the territories of the Princess, or rather of her tributary Caciques, terminated. While they were on the march, the female Cacique alighted from the litter on which she was borne, and eluding the Indian slaves who had charge of her,

* Evidently the species of grouse, commonly called the Prairie hen.

† Xuala, or Choula, is supposed to have been on the site of the present town of Qualatehe, at the source of the Catahootche river. Vide M'Culloch's Researches, Appendix III.

fled into the neighbouring forest. Her escape is related by the Portuguese historian, but no particular reason is given for it; probably, she dreaded being carried away captive beyond the bounds of her dominions. What seems to have caused much regret to the Spaniards, if we may believe the authority already so often referred to, was, that she took with her a small box made of reeds, called by the Indians *Petarca*, filled with beautiful unpierced pearls of great value.* Two negro slaves and a Barbary Moor accompanied her in her flight, and as it was afterwards understood, were concealed by the natives, who rejoiced at having something among them that had belonged to the white men.

During the next five days the Spaniards traversed a chain of mountains covered with oak and mulberry trees, with intervening valleys, rich in pasturage, and irrigated by clear and rapid streams. These mountains were twenty leagues across, and quite uninhabited.† In the course of their weary march throughout this desolate tract, a foot soldier, calling to a horseman, who was his friend, drew forth from his wallet a linen bag, in which were six pounds of pearls, probably filched from one of the Indian sepulchres. These he offered as a gift to his comrade, being heartily tired of carrying them on his back, though he had a pair of broad shoulders, capable of bearing the burthen of a mule. The horseman refused to accept so thoughtless an offer. "Keep them yourself," said he; "you have most need of them. The Governor intends shortly to send messengers to Havana, where you can forward these presents, and have them sold, and obtain three or four horses with the proceeds, so that then you will have no further need to travel on foot."

Juan Terron was piqued at having his offer refused.

* Portuguese Narration, c. 15.

† Probably the termination of the Apalachian or Allegany range, running through the northern part of Georgia. Martin, in his History of Louisiana, makes the Spaniards traverse the state of Tennessee, and even penetrate the state of Kentucky, as far north as the thirty-seventh degree of north latitude. This is evidently erroneous, as both the Portuguese and Spanish chroniclers state, that from the province of Xuala, De Soto struck off in a westerly direction, and we find him, in a few days, on the banks of the river Canasauga.

Belknap, V. 1. p. 189, suggests, that the Spaniards crossed the mountains within the thirty-fifth degree of latitude.

"Well," said he, "if you will not have them, I swear I will not carry them, and they shall remain here." So saying he untied the bag, and whirling it round, as if he were sowing seed, scattered the pearls in all directions among the thickets and herbage. Then putting up the bag in his wallet, as if it was more valuable than the pearls, he marched on, leaving his comrade and other bystanders astonished at his folly.

The soldiers made a hasty search for the scattered pearls, and recovered thirty of them. When they beheld their great size and beauty, none of them being bored and discoloured, they lamented that so many had been lost; for the whole would have sold in Spain for more than six thousand ducats. This egregious folly gave rise to a common proverb in the army, that "there are no pearls for Juan Terron." The poor fellow himself became an object of constant jests and ridicule, until at last, made sensible of his absurd conduct, he implored his comrades never to banter him further upon the subject.*

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1540. HAVING made their way over this mountainous waste, the army reached the province of Guaxule. When within half a league of the principal town, they saw the Cacique approaching, followed by a train of five hundred warriors, arrayed in rich mantles of various skins, and adorned with gaily coloured feathers. In this state he advanced to the Governor, received him with great courtesy and escorted him to his village, which consisted of three hundred houses. It stood in a pleasant spot, bordered by small streams that took their rise in the adjacent mountains. The Governor was quartered in the Cacique's house, erected on a mound, and surrounded by a terrace, wide enough for six men to go abreast.

Here De Soto halted four days, to obtain information respecting the neighbouring country, during which time the Cacique made him a present of three hundred dogs, the flesh of which the Spaniards used as food; though they were

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 20.

not eaten by the natives.* The many streams that traverse this province mingled their waters, forming a grand and majestic river, along the banks of which the army resumed their journey.†

On the second day of their march they entered the small town of Canasauga,‡ where they were met by twenty Indians, bearing baskets of mulberries,—a fruit which abounded in this region, as did likewise the hazel-nut and plum. Continuing forward for five days, through a desert country, on the 25th of June they came in sight of Ichiaha,§ thirty leagues from Guaxale.

This village stood on one end of an island, more than five leagues in length. The Cacique came out to receive the Governor, and gave him a friendly welcome; his warriors treating the Spanish soldiers in the same kind and frank manner. They crossed the river in canoes, and on rafts prepared for the purpose, and were quartered by the Indians in their houses. Most of the soldiers, however, encamped under trees around the village, their worn-out horses enjoying rich and abundant pasturage in the neighbouring meadows. The Spaniards found in this village a quantity of bears' grease preserved in pots, likewise oil made from the walnut, and a pot of honey. The latter they had not before seen, nor did they ever again meet with it during their wanderings.

While he remained in the town of Ichiaha, the Governor, as usual, was diligent in his inquiries after the precious metals. In reply, the Cacique informed him, that about thirty miles to the northward there was a province called Chisca, where there were mines of copper, and also of another metal of the same colour, but finer and brighter. He stated, that it was not used by the natives as much as copper, because it was softer, but that they sometimes melted these metals together. This intelligence roused the attention of De Soto. It agreed with what he had been told at Cofa-

* Portuguese Relation, c. 15.

† Mr. M'Culloch suggests that this river was the Etowee, which falls into the Coosa.

‡ This Indian village has probably given the name to the Connesargo, one of the small tributaries of the river Coosa.—Vide M'Culloch's Researches, p. 525.

§ This is spelt Chiaha in the Portuguese Chronicle.

chiqui, where he had met with small axes of copper, mingled with gold. He consequently determined to set off in search of the mines, but the Cacique informed him, that he would have to traverse an uninhabited wilderness, and mountains impassable for horses, and therefore advised him to send persons to visit the province of Chisca, offering to furnish them with guides.

De Soto adopted his advice. Juan de Villalobos and Francisco de Silvera, two fearless soldiers, forthwith offered their services, and accordingly set off on foot, leaving their horses behind, as these would only delay and embarrass them in the rough country through which they would have to travel.

After an absence of ten days, they returned to the camp and made their report. Part of their route was through excellent land for grain and pasturage, where they had been well received, and entertained by the natives. They had found among them a buffalo's hide, an inch thick, with hair as soft as the wool of a sheep: this hide they mistook as usual for the hide of an ox. In the course of their journey they had crossed mountains, so rugged and precipitous that it was impossible for an army to traverse them. As to the yellow metal of which they had heard, it proved to be nothing but a fine kind of copper or brass, such as they had already met with; nevertheless, from the appearance of the soil they thought it probable that both gold and silver might exist in the neighbourhood.*

During the time De Soto remained at the village awaiting the return of the two soldiers from the mines, several circumstances had occurred. The Cacique came one day to the Governor, bringing a present of a string of pearls, five feet in length. These pearls were as large as filberts, and had they not been bored by means of fire, which had discoloured them, would have been of immense value. De Soto thankfully received them, and in return presented the Indian chief with pieces of velvet, and cloth of various colours and

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 20. Portuguese Relation, c. 16. The mountains here mentioned are supposed to be the Apalachian chain, running through the northern parts of Alabama. The existence of gold in various parts of the Southern States, ascertained of late years, proves that many of these Indian reports were founded in truth.

other Spanish trifles, held in much esteem by the natives. In reply to the demand of De Soto, the Cacique stated that the pearls had been obtained in the neighbourhood. He further told him that in the sepulchre of his ancestors was amassed a prodigious quantity, of which the Spaniards were welcome to carry away as many as they pleased. The Adelantado thanked him for his good will, but replied, that much as he wished for pearls, he never would insult the sanctuaries of the dead to obtain them; adding, that he only accepted the string of pearls as a present from the chieftain's hands.

De Soto having expressed a curiosity to see the manner of extracting pearls from the shells, the Cacique instantly despatched forty canoes to fish for oysters during the night. At an early hour next morning, a quantity of wood was gathered and piled up on the river bank, and being set on fire, was speedily reduced to glowing embers. As soon as the canoes arrived, the embers were spread out and the oysters laid upon them. They quickly opened with the heat, and from some of the first, thus opened, the Indians obtained ten or twelve pearls as large as peas, which they brought to the Governor and Cacique, who were standing together looking on. These were of a fine quality, but somewhat discoloured by the fire and smoke. The Indians were apt further also to injure the pearls thus obtained, by boring them with a heated copper instrument.

De Soto having gratified his curiosity, returned to his quarters to partake of the morning meal. While eating, a soldier entered with a large pearl in his hand. He had stewed some oysters, and in eating them felt the pearl between his teeth. Not having been injured by fire or smoke, it retained its beautiful whiteness, and was so large and perfect in its form, that several Spaniards who pretended to be skilled in these matters, declared it would be worth four hundred ducats in Spain. The soldier would have given it to the Governor to present to his wife, Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, but De Soto declined the generous offer, advising him to preserve it until he should arrive at Havana, where he might purchase horses and other necessaries with it; moreover, as a reward for his liberality, De Soto insisted upon paying the fifth of the value due to the crown.

About this time, one Luis Bravo de Xeres, a cavalier, while strolling, with his lance near the borders of a river, saw a small animal at a short distance, and cast his weapon at it. The lance missed its mark, but, slipping along the grass, shot over the river bank. Luis Bravo ran to recover it, but to his horror found he had killed a Spaniard, who had been fishing with a reed on the margin of the stream. The steel point of the lance having entered one temple and passed out at the other, the poor Spaniard had dropped dead on the spot. His name was Juan Mateos; he was the only one in the expedition that had gray hairs, from which circumstance he was universally called father, and respected as such. His unfortunate death was lamented by the whole army.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1540. ON the ensuing day, after the return of the soldiers from the mines of Chisca, the Governor departed from the village of Ichiaha, leaving the natives well contented with the presents they had received in return for their hospitality.

This day he marched the whole length of the island, and at sunset, on the 2nd of July, came in sight of the village of Acoste, built on the extremity.* The army encamped about a cross-bow shot from the town, while De Soto proceeded, accompanied by a guard of eight troopers, to visit the Cacique. This chieftain, a fierce warrior, placed himself in battle array, at the head of fifteen hundred followers, decorated with war plumes and equipped with arms. He received the Governor with great courtesy, and appeared very kindly disposed; but while they were conversing together, some of the foot soldiers had arrived, and began pillaging the houses. The Indians, exasperated at this outrage, seized some war-clubs that were at hand, and assailed the aggressors. De Soto saw at a glance the peril of his situation, surrounded by enemies. With his wonted presence of mind he seized a cudgel and began beating his own men, at the same time that

* The Portuguese narrator says, this town was seven days' journey from Ichiaha. The Inca is probably the most correct, as he states the length of the island to be about five leagues, which would not be more than a day's march.

he secretly despatched a trooper to order the horse to arm and come to his rescue. This attack upon his own followers, as if indignant at their conduct, re-assured the savages. De Soto then prevailed upon the Cacique to visit the encampment with his chief warriors, and no sooner had the Indians left the village with this intent than the troopers surrounded them and carried them off prisoners.* Notwithstanding their captivity, they maintained an arrogant air, answering every question insolently, shaking their fists, and insulting the Spaniards with taunts and menaces, until the latter lost all patience, and were only restrained from coming to blows by the peremptory commands of the Adelantado. This night they posted sentries, and kept as vigilant a watch as though they had been in an enemy's country.

On the following day, the natives were more peaceable and friendly; the Cacique furnishing the Governor with maize for his journey, and offering him every other necessary that his dominions afforded. A message received from Ichiaha was the cause of this civility. De Soto thanked him for his offer, liberated him and his warriors, and in return for the maize, made him presents that greatly pleased him. The same morning they quitted the village, and crossed the river on rafts and in canoes, rejoicing at having extricated themselves from this village, without bloodshed.

They now travelled more than a hundred leagues through a fertile and populous province, called Cosa, at the rate of four leagues a day; sometimes lodging in the hamlets, sometimes encamping in the fields. Through the whole distance they were treated with great kindness, by the inhabitants, who quartered them in their houses, supplied their wants, and escorted them from one village to another. In this way they proceeded for twenty-four days, until they came in sight of the village of Cosa, from which the province took its name. This was the residence of the Cacique, who had sent them repeated and friendly messages in the course of their journey. He came to meet them in a kind of litter, borne by four of his chief warriors. From his shoulders hung a mantle of martin skins, fashioned much after the manner of the mantles worn by Spanish females, and on his head was a diadem of feathers. Several Indians walked beside the litter, singing and playing upon musical instruments.*

* Portuguese Relation, c. 16.

He was a young man about twenty-six years of age, of a fine person and noble countenance, and attended by a train of a thousand warriors, tall and well formed, as were generally the people of this country. His followers were in their finest array, adorned with lofty plumes of different colours, and wearing mantles composed of various fine skins, many of them martins, scented with musk. Being marshalled in squadrons, with their gay plumes waving in the breeze, they made a brilliant spectacle.

The village was situated on the banks of a river,* amidst green and beautiful meadows, irrigated by numerous small streams. The country round was populous and fruitful; the houses were well stored with maize and a small kind of bean; and fields of Indian corn extended from village to village. There were plums of various kinds; some like those of Spain, others peculiar to the country. Vines clambered to the very tops of the trees which overhung the river. There were others in the fields, with low stocks, which produced large sweet grapes.†

The village contained five hundred dwellings, and as they were very spacious, the captains and soldiers were all well accommodated. De Soto was quartered in the residence of the Cacique.

De Soto often took the precaution, in populous villages, where there was any danger to be apprehended from the inhabitants, to surround the Cacique with guards, which kept him in a kind of honourable durance, and prevented his escape. In this way he served as a hostage to ensure the peaceful conduct of his subjects. It was also a part of the Governor's policy, as has been already shown, to carry the Cacique along with him, as he marched through his dominions; by which means he secured a supply of guides from the villages, as well as of Indians to attend upon the army and transport the baggage. During their march, the Cacique was always treated with great respect and ceremony, having

* Supposed to be the river Coosa, which takes its rise in the Apalachian mountains and empties itself into the Alabama. From the site and description of the village, Mr. M'Culloch presumes it to be the same called in the maps "Old Coosa" situated on the river of the same name in north latitude, about $33^{\circ} 30'$.—See M'Culloch's Researches, p. 524.

† Portuguese Relation, c. 17. This is supposed to have been the same native grape, called the Isabella, which has since been cultivated.—Vide Bancroft, Hist. U. S. c. 2. p. 54.

fine raiment provided for him ; and if so inclined, a horse was furnished him. On arriving at the territories of another Cacique the preceding one and his subjects were dismissed at the frontier.

The Indians of Cosa were indignant at the restraint put upon their Chief ; and manifested a hostile disposition towards the Spaniards . Several of them were taken prisoners and put in chains, but after a short time, most of them, at their Cacique's intercession, were set at liberty.* After this a good understanding prevailed, and the Spaniards were hospitably entertained during twelve days that they remained in the village.

The Cacique would fain have persuaded the Governor to make Cosa his residence and seat of government, or at least to winter there ; but De Soto was anxious to arrive at the bay of Achusi, where he had appointed Captain Diego Maldonado to meet him in the autumn. Since quitting the province of Xula, therefore, he had merely taken a circuitous course through the country, and was now striking off in a southerly direction for the sea-coast.

During their stay in this village, a soldier of dissolute character having deserted, concealed himself among the natives, and was nowhere to be found. A negro, also, being too infirm to travel, was left in charge of the Cacique.

On the 20th of August the Governor departed from Cosa, taking with him, as usual, the Cacique and many of his warriors, together with a train of his subjects, bearing provisions. At one of the villages named Ullabali, a number of Indian warriors assembled, painted and plumed, with bows and arrows in their hands. They welcomed the Spaniards in the name of their Chief, and escorted the Governor into the town, where he found all their men in arms, and judged by their hostile aspect, that they meditated an assault. In fact, he was afterwards informed that they had intended to attempt the rescue of the Cacique Cosa, had he approved of their design ; but he gave them no encouragement.† The army continued forward to the frontier town of Talise.‡

This was an important Indian post, fortified with ramparts

* Portuguese Relation, c. 16.

† Ibid. c. 17.

‡ Supposed to be the same with Tallassee, lying at the elbow of Talapoosa river.—M'Culloch, p. 525. Spelt in the Portuguese Narrative, Tallise.

of earth and strong palisades, and situated on the bank of a rapid river which nearly surrounded it. Though subject to the Cacique of Cosa, it was represented as disaffected to his rule, and inclined to revolt in favour of a powerful chieftain of the neighbourhood, named Tuscaluza. It was supposed, therefore, that the Cacique of Cosa had gladly accompanied the Spaniards to this frontier town, in hopes of overawing his refractory subjects and even his formidable neighbour, by appearing in company with such redoubtable allies.

CHAPTER XXXV.

1540. TUSCALUZA, the Cacique, on whose frontiers the Spaniards had now arrived, appears to have been one of the most potent, proud, and warlike among the native chieftains of the south. His territories must have comprised a great part of what are now the states of the Alabama and Mississippi, and he is one of the few native heroes who have left local memorials behind them. The river Tuscaloosa,* which waters his native valley, bears his name, which has likewise been given to the capital of the state.

This chieftain had heard, with solicitude, of the Spaniards approach to his territories, and probably feared some hostility on their part, in combination with his rival, the Cacique of Cosa. He sent, therefore, his son, a youth eighteen years old, attended by a train of warriors, on an embassy to De Soto, offering him his friendship and services, and inviting him to his residence, which was about thirteen leagues from Talise. The young ambassador was of a noble stature, taller than any Spaniard or Indian in the army, and acquitted himself of his mission with great grace and courtesy. The Governor, struck with his appearance and manners, received him with great distinction; dismissing him with presents for himself and his father, and with assurances that he accepted the latter's friendship and would shortly visit him. The noble youth accordingly crossed the river with his army, in canoes and on rafts, it being too deep at Talise to be forded, and then set forward on his march, taking with him a number of the subjects of the Cacique of Cosa. The latter, being

* Likewise called the Black Warrior River.

on the frontiers of his province, took a friendly leave of the Spaniards.

On the following night they encamped in a wood, about two leagues from the village in which the Cacique of Tuscaluza was quartered, which, however, was not the capital of his province. De Soto set off at an early hour of the morning for this village, preceded by his Camp-Master-General and several of the cavaliers.

The Cacique having already received notice from his scouts, that the Spaniards were at hand, had made some preparations to receive them in state. They consequently found him posted on the crest of a hill, which commanded a wide view over a rich and beautiful valley. He was seated on a kind of stool, made of wood, somewhat concave, but without back or arms. Such was the simple throne used by Caciques of the country. Around him stood a hundred of his principal men, dressed in rich mantles and decorated with plumes. Beside him was his standard-bearer, who bore on the end of a lance a dressed deer-skin, stretched out to the size of a buckler, of a yellow colour, and crossed by three blue stripes. It was the great banner of this warrior chieftain, and the only military standard that the Spaniards met with throughout the whole of their expedition.

Tuscaluza, or Tuscaloosa, (to adopt the modern mode of writing the name,) appeared to be about forty years of age; and his person corresponded with the formidable reputation which he bore throughout the country. Like his son he was of gigantic proportions, being a foot and a half taller than any of his attendants. His countenance was handsome, though stern, expressive of his lofty and indomitable spirit. He was broad across the shoulders, small at the waist, and so admirably formed, that the Spaniards declared him altogether the finest looking man they had ever yet beheld.

The chieftain took not the least notice of the cavaliers and officers who preceded De Soto. These sought in vain to excite his attention, by making their horses curvet and caracole as they passed, and sometimes spurred them up to his very feet. He still maintained the most imperturbable gravity, now and then casting his eyes upon them in a haughty and disdainful manner, but without condescending to utter a word.

When De Soto, however, approached, the Cacique arose

and advanced fifteen or twenty paces to receive him. The Governor alighted, and having embraced him, they remained conversing, while the troops proceeded to take up the quarters allotted them, in and about the village. After this, the Cacique and the Governor proceeded, hand in hand, to the quarters prepared for the latter, which was in a house near that of Tuscaloosa. Here the Indian chief retired with his followers; but De Soto, who knew his warlike character, took care to order that a vigilant watch should be kept upon his movements.*

About this time a strange malady, which was attributed to the want of salt, broke out among the Spaniards. With some, the consequences were fatal. After a little while they were seized with a low fever, the surface of the body became discoloured and of a greenish hue, from the breast downward. At the end of three or four days, their bodies emitted a fetid odour, and they perished of a general mortification of the intestines. A few cases spread horror through the camp; for no one knew how to treat the disorder. In this dilemma some adopted a remedy or rather a preventive, recommended by the Indians; it was a lye made from the ashes of a certain herb, and used with their food, instead of salt. Those who made use of this condiment escaped the fatal mortification of the bowels; others, who rejected it as nauseous, or as the quackery of ignorant savages, fell victims to their prejudices. Some adopted it, but too late, for when the fever and its accompanying mortification had seized a patient, the lye was no longer effectual. So much did the Spaniards suffer for want of salt during their long marchings in the interior, that one of their historians attributes to this cause alone the death of more than sixty within a year.†

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1540. AFTER a halt of two days, the Governor continued his march accompanied by Tuscaloosa, whom, for his own security, he kept with him. De Soto, as usual, ordered that a horse should be provided for the Cacique; but for some

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 24. Portuguese Relation, c. 17.

† Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 4. c. 3.

time they sought in vain for one of sufficient size and strength to bear so gigantic a rider. At length they found a stout hackney, belonging to the Governor, which, from its powerful frame, was used as a pack-horse; when, however, the Cacique bestrode it, his feet nearly touched the ground. The Governor had given Tuscaloosa a dress of scarlet cloth, and a flowing mantle of the same, which, with his towering plumes, added to the grandeur of his appearance, and made him conspicuous among the steel-clad warriors around him.

After a march of thirty-six leagues, they arrived at the principal village, called Tuscaloosa,* from which the province and the Cacique derived their name. Like Talise, it was situated upon a peninsula formed by the windings of the same river, which had here become wider and deeper.†

During the following day the Spaniards were busily employed in passing the stream on light rafts made of reeds and dry wood, the inhabitants not having any canoes. As the river was gentle, the troops crossed it without difficulty, but not having completed their transit until near sunset, they encamped for the night in a beautiful valley about a league beyond.

The next morning two soldiers were missing. One of them, named Juan de Villalobos, was much given to wander by himself to explore the country, and it was supposed that they had strayed together, and either lost themselves in the woods or been cut off by the natives. De Soto enquired after them of the Indians who accompanied Tuscaloosa. They were abrupt and insolent in their replies. "Why do you ask us about your people?" they asked; "Are we responsible for them? Did you place them under our charge?"

The suspicions of De Soto were the more excited by these replies. He had high words with their Cacique on the subject, and threatened to detain him until the Spaniards should be produced. Seeing this menace was of no avail,

* This town is called Piache by the Portuguese narrator.

† It is supposed that this was really the Alabama river, formed by the confluence of the Coosa and Talapooso (the latter being the stream which flowed by Talise.) There is a ford on the Alabama, about sixty leagues above its confluence with the Tombecbe, which the Choctaws called Taskaloussas. Here the army may have crossed.—Vide M'Culloch, p. 525; Bossus' Travels in Louisiana, p. 282.

the Governor concluded that the soldiers had been massacred; but dissembled his indignation for the present, lest he should create difficulties and delay his progress. He continued his march, therefore, in company with Tuscaloosa, apparently on amicable terms, though they were secretly distrustful of each other, and the Cacique felt that he was a kind of prisoner. In the course of their march, Tuscaloosa despatched one of his people to a town called Mauvila,* under pretext of ordering a supply of provisions and Indian attendants for the army. On the third day, as they drew near to Mauvila, their route lay through a very populous country. At a very early hour the next morning, De Soto summoned two confidential men, named Gonzalo Quadrado Xaramillo, and Diego Vasquez, sent them in advance, with orders to enter the village, observe what was going on, and there await his arrival.

Assembling a hundred horse and a hundred foot as a vanguard, he then set off with these for the village, ordering Louis de Moscoso, the Camp-Master General, to follow speedily with the remainder of the forces. The Cacique Tuscaloosa, accompanied the Governor; being evidently retained as a kind of hostage.

About eight o'clock in the morning of October the 18th, they arrived before Mauvila.† This was the Cacique's stronghold, where he and his principal warriors resided; and being on the frontiers of his territories, it was strongly fortified. It stood in a fine plain, surrounded by a high

* Maville, in the Portuguese account.

† This town is supposed to have stood on the north side of the Alabama, about the junction of that river with the Tombecbe, within a hundred miles from Pensacola. There is little doubt that it gave the name to the present river and bay of Mobile. The letters *v* and *b* are often used indifferently in Spanish, in place of each other, and articulated in nearly the same manner. Charlevoix, in his *Journal Historique*, Let. 33, p. 452, says: "Garcilaso de la Vega, dans son *Histoire de la Floride*, parle d'une Bourgade appelée *Mauvila*, laquelle a sans doute donnée son nom à la Rivière, et à la nation, qui était établie sur ses bords. Ces Mauviliens étaient alors très-puissans; à peine en reste-t-il aujourd'hui quelques vestiges." In the account of these marchings, and of the affairs at Mauvila, I have collated the narratives of the Inca and the Portuguese author, and have availed myself of both accounts, where they were not totally irreconcilable. The Inca, as usual, is much the most minute, graphic, and characteristic, and supports his main authority in various places, by extracts from the journals of the two soldiers.

wall formed of huge trunks of trees driven into the ground, side by side, and wedged together. These were crossed within and without by others smaller and longer, bound to them by bands made of split reeds and wild vines. The whole was thickly plastered over with a kind of mortar, made of clay and straw trampled together, which filled up every chink and crevice of the wood-work, appearing as if smoothed with a trowel. Throughout its whole circuit, the wall was pierced with loopholes, from whence arrows might be discharged at an enemy, and at every fifty paces it was surmounted by a tower, capable of holding seven or eight fighting men. Numbers of the trees which had been driven into the ground had taken root, and flourished, springing up out of the rampart, and spreading their branches above it, so as to form a circle of foliage round the village. There were but two gates to the place, one to the east the other to the west. In the centre was a large square, around which the principal dwellings were erected. The whole number of houses in the place did not exceed eighty, but they were of large size, capable of lodging from five to fifteen hundred persons each. They were built after the Indian fashion, not divided into apartments, but consisting simply of one great hall, like a church; and as they belonged either to the Cacique or to his principal subjects, they were constructed with more than usual skill.*

CHAPTER XXXVII.

1540. WHEN the Governor and his van-guard appeared before the town, a splendid train of warriors came forth to receive them, painted, decorated, and clad in robes of skins and flaunting feathers of every brilliant colour. This cavalcade advanced singing and dancing, and playing on rude instruments of music. To these succeeded a band of young damsels, beautiful in form and feature, as the natives of this part of the country generally were.

In this way the Governor entered the village, side by side with the Cacique in his flaming mantle of scarlet, followed by a train of horsemen in glittering armour, and preceded

* This description of Mauvila is entirely from the Inca.

by groups of Indian dancing. Having reached the square, they alighted, the Governor ordering that the horses should be taken outside the village and tethered until quarters were provided for them. The Cacique then, addressing Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, pointed out one of the largest houses which had been prepared for De Soto and his principal officers, and an adjacent one for his servants and attendants. The rest of the troops were lodged in cabins of bark and branches, constructed for their reception about a bow-shot without the walls. The Governor, although not well pleased with an arrangement which would separate him from his troops, replied, that it should be attended to when the Camp-Master arrived. The Cacique then signified a wish to be left to himself, but was given to understand that he must continue with De Soto. The haughty spirit of Tucaloosa warmed at being thus kept in thralldom. He told De Soto that he might depart in peace whenever he pleased ; but that he must not attempt to carry him out of his dominions. So saying, he entered a house where some of his subjects were assembled, armed with bows and arrows. The moment he was gone, Gonzalo Quadrado Xaramillo, one of the cavaliers who had been sent forward to observe the movements of the Indians, approached the Governor, and reported that various circumstances had led him to suspect some dark and treacherous plot. He stated that, in the few houses within sight, more than ten thousand chosen warriors were assembled ; not one of them old, or of the servile class, but all fighting men, young, noble, and well armed : and that many of the houses were filled with weapons. Not a child was to be found in the place ; and though there were many females, they were all young girls. The inhabitants, too, had been diligently employed in strengthening the palisades round the town, and in clearing the fields, for a considerable distance round the village. The very roots and herbage had been pulled up by the hand as if to clear the ground for battle.

The Governor reflecting for a moment, directed word to be passed secretly from one to the other, among the troopers, to hold themselves ready for action. He also charged Xaramillo to communicate all that he had observed to the Master of the Camp, the moment he should arrive, in order that he might make his arrangements accordingly. Meanwhile he

determined to observe a friendly demeanour, and endeavour to conciliate the Cacique by courteous treatment.

Word was now brought to the Governor that his servants had prepared the morning's meal in one of the houses which looked upon the square; he immediately sent Juan Ortiz to invite Tuscaloosa to the repast, as they had been accustomed to eat together.

Juan Ortiz presented himself at the door of the large house into which the Cacique had entered, but several Indians met him at the threshold and refused him admittance. The message he brought was passed in to their Chief, and word returned that he would come to the Governor immediately.

Some time having elapsed without his appearing, Juan Ortiz delivered a second message, and received a similar reply. After another interval, he returned a third time, and called out, "Tell Tuscaloosa to come forth; the food is upon the table, and the Governor is waiting for him."

Upon this, an Indian who appeared to be the General, stepped from the threshold. He was in a furious heat, and his eyes flashed fire. "Who are these robbers? these vagabonds!" he cried, "who keep calling to my Chief, Tuscaloosa, Come forth! come forth! with as little reverence as if he were one of them? By the sun and moon! this insolence is no longer to be borne. Let us cut them to pieces on the spot, and put an end to their tyranny."

Scarcely had he spoken these words, when a follower stepped up behind him, and placed in his hand a bow and arrows. The Indian general threw from his shoulders the folds of a superb mantle of martin skins, which was buttoned round his neck, and baring his arm, drew to the head an arrow, levelled at a knot of Spaniards in the square. Before he had time to wing the shaft, a blow from the sword of Baltazar de Gallegos laid open the whole of the side exposed by throwing back his mantle: his entrails gushed out, and he fell dead on the spot.*

His son, a youth of eighteen, of noble demeanour, sprang forward to avenge his death, and discharged six or seven arrows as fast as he could draw them; but seeing that they struck harmless upon the armour of Gallegos, he took his bow in both hands, and closing with the Spaniard, gave him

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 13.

three or four blows on the head, with such rapidity and force, that the blood spouted from beneath his casque, and ran over his forehead. Gallegos, as soon as he could recover from the surprise, gave the savage two thrusts in the breast with his sword, that laid him dead at his feet.

The war-whoop now rang through the village. Multitudes of warriors, ready armed, poured from every house, and attacked the Spaniards who were scattered about the principal street. Though overwhelmed by numbers, the Spaniards kept a bold face to the enemy, fighting stoutly, and disputing the ground inch by inch, until they retreated out of the capital, leaving five of their number slain.

Numbers of the cavalry who had tethered their horses outside the walls, and returned into the street, seeing the furious onset of the natives, ran out of the gate to the places where their steeds were tied. Those who made most speed were enabled to mount. Some who lingered, had only time to cut the reins or halters of their horses and drive them off; while others, still more pressed, were obliged to abandon them to their fate; having the grief of seeing them shot by innumerable arrows, amidst the exulting yells of the savages.

The enemy being in great force, divided into two bands; one to encounter the retreating Spaniards, the other to kill their horses, and gather the baggage and effects of the army, which had by this time arrived, and lay heaped under the wall and about the fields. Every thing thus fell into the enemy's hands, except the baggage of Andres de Vasconcellos, which had not yet been brought up. The spoils were conveyed by the Indians into their capital with great triumph, and put into their houses. They knocked off the chains of the slaves who carried the baggage of the Spanish army, and gave them weapons to fight with.

Meanwhile the few cavaliers who had been able to mount their horses, together with some troopers, just arrived from the main body, united their forces and endeavoured to protect their comrades who were fighting on foot. The approach of the cavalry checked the impetuosity of the Indians and afforded time for the Spaniards to rally and form themselves into two bodies, one of horse the other of foot. They then charged the enemy with a fury, inspired by their recent

maltreatment, and drove them back into the village, whither they would have followed them, but were assailed with such showers of stones and arrows from the wall and loop-holes, that they were compelled to draw back.

The savages seeing them retreat, again rushed forth, some by the gate, others letting themselves down from the wall; and closing with their enemies, seized hold of the very lances of the horsemen, struggling with them until drawn more than two hundred paces from the wall.

In this way they fought backwards and forwards for three hours without intermission; the Spaniards always standing by each other and keeping their front to the enemy, in which alone consisted their safety, being so few in number. They found, however, that they suffered too severely when near the village, from the missiles launched from the wall, and that their best chance was in the open fields where they had room to manage their horses and wield their lances.

Throughout all these attacks and defences, Baltazar de Gallegos,—the same who had struck the first blow in the battle,—was ever in front, and in the hottest of the fight. His perilous deeds were anxiously watched from afar, by his brother, Fray Juan de Gallegos, a worthy Dominican friar. Mounted on horseback, in his monk's dress, with a broad clerical hat on his head, he hovered about the skirts of the battle, spurring after the squadron in its attacks, wheeling round and galloping off in its retreats. The worthy friar was not a fighting man; his only object was to call his brother out of the affray, and mount him on the horse which he bestrode, that he might fight with more effect and less danger.

The bold Baltazar, however, heeded not his brother's calls. Considering that his honour would not permit him to leave his post, he continued fighting on foot. At length, the peculiar dress of the priest, and his loud and repeated calls to his brother, attracted the notice of the enemy, who probably supposed him some chieftain encouraging his soldiers. Accordingly, in one of the retreats, as the friar's broad back was turned upon the foe, and he was galloping off at full speed, an Indian warrior sped a shaft with so true an aim, that, though at a great distance, it struck him between the shoulders. Fortunately, he was protected by the two hoods of his dress, which lay in thick folds upon

his back; his broad hat also, secured by a cord under his chin, had fallen back in his flight, and hung like a shield upon his shoulders; the arrow, therefore, met with so much resistance as to make but a slight wound. It, however, damped the fraternal zeal of the spiritual warrior, who from that time kept himself at a wary distance from the battle.

A harder fate befell Don Carlos Enriquez, a youthful cavalier, who had married a niece of the Adelantado, and was beloved by the whole army for his urbanity and his virtues. From the commencement of the battle he had fought valiantly, and was conspicuous in every assault. In the last charge his horse was wounded in the breast by an arrow, which remained buried in the flesh. As soon as the squadron had retreated, Don Carlos endeavoured to draw forth the shaft. Passing his lance from his right to his left hand, he leaned forward, and stooping over the neck of his horse, seized the dart, and endeavoured to pull it forth. In his exertion, he leaned so much on one side as to expose his neck, the only part of his person unprotected by armour. In an instant, an arrow, tipped with flint, came with the swiftness of lightning, buried itself in his throat, and the poor youth fell from his horse mortally wounded, though he did not expire until the following day.

The Spaniards suffered severely in these repeated conflicts; but their loss was nothing in comparison with that of the Indians, who had no defensive armour, and on whom every blow was effective. Seeing what advantage the Spaniards derived from their horses in the open field, their enemies now shut themselves up within their village, closing the gates and manning the ramparts.

Upon this the Governor ordered the cavalry, being the best armed, to dismount, and taking bucklers for their defence, and battle-axes in their hands, to break open the gates, and strive to take the village by storm.

In an instant a band of two hundred resolute cavaliers dashed forward to the assault. The savages received them valiantly, and beat them back several times. The gate, however, was soon broken open and the Spaniards rushed in, pell-mell, amidst a shower of darts and stones. The opening being too narrow to admit them all readily, some attacked the wall with their axes; quickly demolished the frail facing

of clay and straw, and laying bare the cross-beams and their fastenings, assisted each other to scramble up by them, and thus got into the village to the aid of their comrades.

The savages fought desperately, both in the streets and from the tops of houses. The Spaniards, galled by missiles from the latter, and fearful that their enemies would retake the houses already gained, set them on fire. Being composed of reeds and other combustible materials, they were soon wrapped in flames and smoke, which added to the horror of the scene.

While this conflict was raging in one part of the village, a kind of siege was going on in another. The moment they had closed their gates, the enemy turned their attention to the large house in the square, which had been assigned for the use of the Governor's retinue, and in which all his camp equipage was deposited. They had not assailed it before, supposing it to be in their power: they now, therefore, repaired to it merely to share the spoils, but, to their surprise, found it strongly defended. Within were three cross-bowmen, five halberdiers of the Governor's guard, who usually accompanied his camp equipage, and an Indian, armed with bow and arrows, who had been made prisoner by the Spaniards on their first landing, and had ever since proved faithful to them. Besides these fighting men, there were a priest, a friar, and two slaves belonging to the Governor. One and all defended the house stoutly: the laymen with their weapons, the priests with their devotions. The savages tried in vain to gain the portal. They then mounted on the roof, and made an opening in three or four places; but so well did the cross-bowmen and the Indian ply their weapons, that when an enemy showed himself at any of the openings, he was immediately transfixes by an arrow.

Thus did this little garrison maintain a desperate and almost hopeless defence, until De Soto and his followers having fought their way into the village, as has been mentioned, arrived at the door of the dwelling, and dispersed its assailants. The fighting portion of the garrison mingled with their comrades and continued the strife; the clerical portion took refuge in the fields, where they could carry on their spiritual warfare with equal vigour and more security.

The wild and mingled affray had now lasted four hours, but nothing could quell the fury of the Indians, who dis-

dained either to yield or ask quarter. Many of the Spaniards, exhausted by the fierce strife, fainting and choked with thirst, ran to a pool of water, crimsoned with the blood of the dead and dying, and having refreshed themselves, hastened back and rushed again into the battle.*

De Soto had hitherto fought on foot, but as usual, waxing hot with his exertions, he hastened out of the village, seized a horse, sprang into the saddle, and followed by Nuño Tobar, galloped back into the square, lance in hand, shouting the battle-cry of "Our Lady and Santiago!" Calling out to the Spaniards to make way for him, he dashed among the thickest of the enemy;—Tobar followed. They spurred their chargers, up and down, through the multitude in the square and principal street; trampling down some, lancing others right and left, and leaving a track of carnage wherever they passed.

In this wild mêlée, as the Governor rose in his stirrups to pierce an Indian, another, who was behind, aimed at the part exposed between the saddle and the cuirass, and buried an arrow in his thigh. In the confusion of the combat, De Soto had no time to extract the arrow, which remained rankling in the wound for several hours, during which time, though unable to sit in his saddle, he continued fighting on horseback; "a proof," says the Inca Garcilaso, "not merely of his valour, but of his good horsemanship."

Meanwhile the fire was raging through the village, and making horrible ravages among the enemy. Those who continued within doors were consumed by the flames or stifled by the smoke: those who fought from the roofs were either cut off by the fire, or obliged to throw themselves down. Many women and children perished in their dwellings.

At one time, a strong wind swept both flames and smoke along the street upon the Indians, who, while thus blinded and bewildered, were charged by their enemies and driven back; but the wind veering, favoured them in turn, and they soon regained all the ground they had lost.

Maddened at seeing their ranks thinned, and their warriors lying slaughtered in heaps, the savages called upon their women to seize the weapons of the slain and revenge their death. Many had already been fighting by the side of their husbands, but on this appeal every one rushed to the

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 16.

conflict. Some armed themselves with the swords, lances, and partisans of the Spanish soldiery, who had been either killed or disarmed, and thus wounded them with their own weapons ; others seized bows and arrows, which they plied with strength and skill almost equal with that of their husbands. In their fury, they threw themselves before the men, and even rushed upon the weapons of their enemies ; for the courage of woman, when once roused, is fierce and desperate, and her spirit more reckless and vehement than that of man. The Spaniards, however, having consideration for their sex, and pity for their despair, abstained from slaying or wounding them.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1540. WHILE the battle was thus raging at Mauvila, Luis de Moscoso, Master of the Camp was loitering by the way with his forces. Instead of speedily following the vanguard led by De Soto, he had sallied forth late from his encampment and permitted his men to scatter themselves about the fields, hunting and amusing themselves. So long a time having now elapsed since they experienced any hostility from the natives, they had lost all fear and precaution.

In this way they straggled negligently and tardily forward, unsuspecting of danger. At length, those in front heard the distant clangour of trumpet and drum, mingled with the yells and shouts of combatants, and beheld a column of smoke rising in the air. Suspecting the cause, they passed the alarm, from mouth to mouth, to those who were behind, and pressed forward with all speed to the scene of action. It was late in the afternoon before they reached it.

Among the foremost who arrived before the village was Diego de Soto, nephew to the Governor. Learning the fate of his cousin Don Carlos Enriquez, to whom he was tenderly attached, he vowed to revenge his death. Throwing himself from his horse, and seizing a buckler, he rushed into the village, sword in hand, and plunged into the thickest of the fight. Scarcely, however, had he entered, when an arrow pierced his eye and came out at the back of his head. He fell to the earth, without uttering a word, and died the following day in great agony. His death added to the afflic-

tion which the army felt for that of his brave cousin. The two young friends and relations, thus united in death, were generous spirits, worthy alike of each other's affection, and of such an uncle.

When the rear-guard arrived at the village, great numbers of the savages were fighting in the adjacent fields, where the ground had been cleared and prepared for action. The Spaniards assailed them vigorously, and had a long and obstinate combat; for many of the native warriors had clambered over the walls, and advanced into the field. At length the Indians were routed and fled. Being pursued by the horsemen, few escaped destruction.

Although it was now near the hour of sunset, the shouts and battle cries of the combatants still arose from the burning village. As yet, from want of space, no horseman had fought within the walls, except De Soto and Nuño Tobar; but now a great number of cavalry dashed in at the gate, dispersing themselves through the streets, routing and killing all the natives they encountered.

Ten or twelve cavaliers spurred up the main street, where the battle was hottest, and coming upon the rear of a body of Indians, male and female, who were fighting with the fury of demons, broke through them with such impetuosity, as not merely to overturn them, but also several of the Spaniards with whom they were contending. The carnage was horrible, for the savages refused to surrender or lay down their arms, but fought until all were slain.

Thus ended this sanguinary struggle, which had continued during nine hours. The village was a smoking ruin, covered with slain, and victory declared for the Spaniards, just as the sun went down. The last Indian warrior that wielded a weapon was one of those who fought in the village. He was so blinded by fury as to be unconscious of the fate of his comrades, until glancing his eye around, he beheld them all lying dead. Seeing further contest hopeless, he turned to fly, and reaching the wall, sprang lightly to the top, thinking to escape into the fields. Here, however, to his dismay, he beheld squadrons of horse and foot below him, and the field covered with his slaughtered countrymen. Escape was impossible; death or slavery awaited him. In his despair, he snatched the string from his bow, passed it round his neck, and fastening the other end to a branch of one of the trees

that grew out of the rampart, threw himself from the wall, and was strangled before the Spaniards had time to prevent the catastrophe.

Such was the deadly battle of Mauvila, one of the most sanguinary, considering the number of combatants, which had occurred among the discoveries of the new world. Forty-two Spaniards fell in the conflict; eighteen of them received their fatal wounds either in the eyes or mouth, for the Indians, finding their bodies cased in armour, aimed at their faces. There scarcely remained a Spaniard that was not more or less wounded, some in many places. Thirteen died before their wounds could be dressed, and twenty-two after, so that in all eighty-two perished. To this loss must be added that of forty-two horses killed by the enemy, and mourned by the Spaniards as if they had been so many fellow-soldiers.

Among the Indians, the havoc was almost incredible. Several thousand are said to have perished by fire and sword. The plain around the village was strewn with more than twenty-five hundred bodies. Within the walls the streets were blocked up with dead. A great number of persons were destroyed in their houses by fire. In one building alone a thousand perished, the flames having entered by the door, prevented their escape, and thus all were either burnt or suffocated: the greater part were females.

Without the walls, the body of Tuscaloosa the younger was found among the slain; but the fate of his father was never satisfactorily ascertained. According to the Portuguese narrative, several Indian prisoners affirmed, that on the grand assault of the village by De Soto and his horsemen, Tuscaloosa's warriors entreated him to withdraw from the conflict, and put himself into a place of security, in order that, should they perish in battle, as all had resolved to do, rather than turn their backs, he might survive to govern the country. The proud Cacique at first resisted their entreaties, but at length, overcome by their urgent supplications, he fled from the ill-fated town, accompanied by a small body of natives, carrying with him his scarlet mantle and the choicest things he could find among the Spanish baggage. According to the Inca, however, the account generally believed by the Spaniards was that he had perished in the flames; and this, in fact, is most consistent with his haughty and patriotic spirit, which would scarcely permit him to survive

so ruinous a defeat, and desert his capital and people, in the moment of their most imminent peril. He was evidently one of the bravest as well as proudest and most potent of the native princes. His name is still heard in that land which he loved so well, and defended so desperately; and it is a name which deserves to be held in veneration as that of a hero and a patriot.

NOTE.—The Inca and the Portuguese historian differ widely in their estimate of the killed and wounded in this action. Garcilaso de la Vega states the loss of the Spaniards to have been eighty-two, and of the Indians above eleven thousand. The Portuguese narrator states the Spanish loss to have been eighteen killed and one hundred and fifty wounded, and of the Indians twenty-five hundred slain; which is the number stated by the Inca to have been killed in the battle outside the town. The statement of the Inca is given more in detail, and apparently with a more intimate knowledge of facts; having the statements of three several eye-witnesses, from which to make up his account. That of the Portuguese is more vague and general. The estimate of the Inca may be somewhat exaggerated; yet it must be taken into consideration that the Mauvilians were a numerous and powerful tribe, and joined in this battle by the warriors of neighbouring provinces. Their number must consequently have been very great. It is stated by both writers that they all fought to the last gasp, so that the slaughter was no doubt prodigious. In so desperate and protracted a conflict, the number of eighty-two slain on the part of the Spaniards, appears much more probable than that of eighteen.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

1540. THE situation of the Spaniards after the battle of Mauvila was truly deplorable. Most of them were severely wounded,—all exhausted by fatigue and hunger. The village was reduced to ashes around them, and the whole of their baggage with its supplies of food and medicine had been destroyed.

The first care of De Soto, though badly wounded himself, was for his troops. Having ordered that the dead should be collected together for interment on the following day, he directed that immediate relief should be administered to the wounded. Here, however, was the difficulty. There was but one surgeon in the army, and he slow and unskilful. There were at least seventeen hundred grievous wounds, requiring a surgeon's care; several having fallen to the share of a single soldier. The mere flesh wounds were left for the patient himself to cure; but those in the joints, and other

critical parts, which threatened to maim and disable the patient, required more skilful attention. Unfortunately, they had no ointments nor medicines of any kind, nor linen for bandages; all had been consumed. Not even shelter was to be found from the cold and night-dews, for not a house in the village remained standing. At length branches of trees having been brought from the cabins, erected without the village, sheds were put up against such of the walls as still stood. Under these the wounded were conveyed for shelter, and straw spread for their reception. Those who had been least harmed, exerted themselves to relieve their suffering companions. Some opened the bodies of the dead Indians, and converted their fat into ointment; others took off their own shirts and those of their slaughtered comrades, to make bandages for the disabled. As these were of linen, they were set apart for the severest wounds; those which were slight, the Spaniards bound with the doublets of their slain comrades, and lining of their hose, or other materials of a coarser kind.

The horses which had been killed were cut up, and their flesh preserved for the sustenance of the wounded. In spite of every exertion, however, many Spaniards died miserably, before any relief could be administered to them. Thus passed that wretched night, amid bitter lamentations and dying groans. Such as were able to bear arms, patrolled both the camp and village, maintaining a vigilant watch, in case of an assault.

The wounded Spaniards remained eight days in these miserable shelters. They were then removed to those cabins which their enemies had erected without the walls, where they had more comfortable quarters. Here fifteen more days were passed. During this period, the least disabled sallied forth on foraging expeditions, confining these to a circuit of about four leagues, and found abundant supplies of provisions in the numerous deserted hamlets scattered about the country.

In every thicket and ravine they discovered dead or dying Indians, who had not been able to reach their homes. Many, also, had taken shelter in the hamlets, and lay there, apparently without any one to minister to their necessities. It was understood, however, that their friends brought them nourishment by night, but returned to their retreats in the

forests before dawn. The Spaniards treated these poor savages with kindness, sharing their food with them.

In foraging the woods, the troopers captured fifteen or twenty natives. On being asked whether their people were meditating another attack, they replied, that their bravest warriors having fallen in the late battle, none were left to make war. Their information appeared to be true; for, during all the time the Spaniards remained in this neighbourhood, no Indian ventured near their camp.

From the prisoners thus taken, and others captured in different villages, they enquired concerning the past stratagems and design of Tuscaloosa, which had produced such mischief.

That implacable and warlike chieftain, from the time he first heard of the Spaniards' approach towards his dominions, had meditated their destruction. With that object, he had sent his son, accompanied by a train of warriors, to watch their movements; and had engaged the natives of several contiguous provinces to join in the plot, promising to share with them the spoils of conquest.

The women, too, most of whom had accompanied their husbands and lovers from the neighbouring districts, declared they had been enticed to Mauvila, by promises of rich robes of scarlet cloth, silks, linen, and velvet, with which to decorate themselves for their dances. They were to have horses, on which to ride in triumph, and Spaniards to wait upon them as slaves. Many came for the purpose of being present at a great feast, others to participate in the rejoicings intended to be held after their victory, and to witness the exploits of their lovers.

On arriving at the village with the Adelantado, Tucaloosa had held a council with his principal warriors, in which it was debated whether they should attack the van-guard which had already arrived, or wait until the whole should be within their power. It is probable that the Indian General's heat and impatience caused the plot to explode before the appointed time.

It has been shown that the Spaniards lost all their baggage and private effects in the conflagration of the village. What gave them the greatest concern, however, was the loss of a small portion of wine and of wheaten flour which they had carefully preserved for the performance of mass. All the

sacerdotal dresses, together with the chalices, and other articles of worship, were destroyed; but the loss of the wheaten flour was irreparable. Consultations were held between the ecclesiastics and laymen, whether bread made of maize might not be adopted in case of extremity; it was, however, decided, that the use of any thing but wheat was contrary to the canons of the church.

From this time therefore, on Sundays and on saints' days, an altar was prepared, and the priest officiated, arrayed in robes of dressed deerskins, fashioned in imitation of his sacerdotal dresses; performing all parts of the ceremony, except consecrating the bread and wine. This constituted what the Spaniards called "a dry mass."

CHAPTER XL.

1540. WHILE encamped at the village of Mauvila, overwhelmed with care and anxiety, De Soto was unexpectedly cheered by tidings that ships with white men on board had arrived on the sea-coast toward which he was shaping his course. He had heard a rumour of this kind before the battle, and it was confirmed by some prisoners taken in the village. He further learnt from them, that the bay of Achusi, where he had directed Gomez Arias and Diego Maldonado to cast anchor, was not more than seven days' journey distant.* He doubted not, therefore, that the ships in question were commanded by those officers, and brought reinforcements and supplies from Spain for his projected settlement. He now considered himself on the eve of accomplishing his wishes;—of founding that colony which would assure the possession of the country he had explored, and enable him to pursue with advantage his search for gold.

He had brought with him thus far the Cacique made prisoner by Maldonado at the port of Achusi. He had always treated him with great kindness, but had not sent him to his home, because of the distance and the hazard he would incur of being killed or captured by the way. Learning, however, that the road was now secure, he granted him permission to return; at the same time, earnestly charging

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 19. The Inca states the distance at about thirty leagues.

him to preserve the friendship of the Spaniards who would soon be residents in his country. The Cacique departed with expressions of gratitude for the kindness he had experienced, and assurances to the Governor that he would be happy to welcome him to his territory.

While De Soto regarded the ships as the means of conquest and colonization, many of his followers only looked forward to their arrival as supplying the means of escape out of a disastrous country. Some of them had been engaged in the Conquest of Peru, and contrasted the wealth of that golden empire with the poverty of the land through which they had recently struggled, where neither gold nor silver was to be found; and they did not fail to dwell upon this contrast when conversing with their companions. The Spaniards generally were disheartened by the disasters of the recent battle, and the implacable fierceness displayed by the natives. They saw that such a people were not to be easily subjugated. Instead, therefore, of wearing themselves out in this unpromising land, it seemed better to seek other countries already conquered, and abounding with wealth, as Mexico and Peru, where they might enrich themselves with less risk and less toil. For these reasons they determined, on reaching the sea-shore, to abandon Florida and seek their fortunes in New Spain.

Secret information of these rumours was brought to De Soto by some of his most devoted followers. He could scarcely credit it, and went through the camp at night, alone and in disguise, to ascertain the truth. In this way he overheard a conversation in the hut of Juan Gaytan, the treasurer, in which that cavalier and several of his comrades expressed their determination to abandon the enterprise, and either sail for Mexico or Peru, or return to Spain in the ships at Achusi.

De Soto stood aghast at hearing these resolves. He saw that his present force would disband the moment his followers could shift for themselves; and he was aware that it would be impossible for him to raise a new army. He had no booty of gold and silver to display, with which to tempt new adventurers; and the specimens of pearls which he had intended to send to Cuba, were all lost in the conflagration of Mauvila. Should his present forces desert him, therefore, he would be stripped of his dignity and command, blasted in

reputation, his fortune would be expended in vain, and his enterprise, which had cost so much toil and trouble, a subject of scoffing rather than of renown. De Soto was a man extremely jealous of his honour; and as he reflected upon these gloomy prospects, they produced sudden and desperate resolves. He disguised his anger and his knowledge of the schemes he had overheard; but determined to frustrate them by turning his back upon the coast, and striking again into the interior.

He resolved neither to seek the ships, nor furnish any tidings of himself until he should have completed his enterprise gloriously, by discovering new regions of wealth, like those of Peru and Mexico.*

A change came over De Soto from this day. He was frustrated in his favourite scheme of colonization, and had lost confidence in his followers. Instead of manifesting his usual frankness, energy, and alacrity, he became a moody, irritable, discontented man. He no longer attempted to strike out any great undertaking, but stung with secret disappointment, wandered recklessly from place to place, apparently without order or object, as if careless both of time and of life, and only anxious to terminate his existence.

1540. It was on Sunday, the 18th of November, that De Soto, finding his troops sufficiently recovered from their wounds to bear the march, broke up his encampment at Mauvila, and turned his face to the northward, to penetrate provinces which he had not yet visited. His feelings and motives for thus turning his back upon the sea-coast he kept to himself. He was always a man strict and peremptory in exacting military obedience, and if his troops murmured at the route he chose, it is probable they were overawed and reduced to tacit submission, by the increased sternness of his manner.

The soldiers were provided with two days' provisions of maize, yet they were five days traversing a pleasant though uninhabited country:—upon the sixth they entered the province of Chicaza.† The first village at which they arrived was called Cabusto. It was the largest in the province, and situated on a river, wide and deep, with high banks.‡

* It was a Sunday. Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 22. Portuguese Relation, c. 19.

† The Portuguese narrator says, they entered into the province of Pafallaya.

‡ Supposed to be the Black Warrior, or Tuscaloosa river.

The Governor, as usual, sent offers of peace to the inhabitants, who rejected them with scorn. "War is what we desire," was the reply; "a war of fire and blood." Approaching the village, the Spaniards saw more than fifteen hundred warriors drawn out before it. These skirmished with them for a time, but, overpowered by the fury of their attack, fled to the river. Some sprang into canoes, others plunged into the water, and thus soon crossed to the opposite bank, where their main force, to the number of eight thousand warriors, was posted to dispute the passage.

The Spaniards found the village perfectly stripped and abandoned. The inhabitants had sent off all their effects, together with their wives and children, and were prepared for war. They determined to risk no open battle, but to dispute the pass of the river, which, on account of its depth and high banks, they could easily do. For this purpose they had stretched their forces two leagues along the bank, hoping to compel the army to take a different route.

When night closed in the Indians annoyed their enemies greatly, by sudden attacks and frequent alarms. They crossed the river in their canoes at different places, and then, uniting in a band, attacked De Soto's camp. The Spaniards made use of stratagem in their defence. There were three landing places where the natives disembarked. Here the Spaniards dug pits, in which a party of archers and arquebusiers concealed themselves. As soon as they saw the Indians leap on shore and quit their canoes, their ambushed enemies rushed out, sword in hand, and cut off their retreat. Three several times they repeated this successfully, after which the savages did not again attempt to land, but contented themselves with vigilantly guarding the passage of the river.

The Governor now ordered one hundred of the most skilful men to build two large boats, or piraguas, nearly flat, and very spacious. That the enemy might not perceive their operations, he directed them to be built in a forest, a league and a half further up the river, and about a league from its banks.

So assiduous were the workmen, that in twelve days the piraguas were finished. In order to transport them to the river, two carriages were constructed, on which they were drawn by mules and horses, and pushed forward by men, who in the most difficult places carried the vessels on their shoulders. In this way, one morning, before daybreak, they

were conveyed to the water and launched, where there were convenient landing-places on either bank.

De Soto, who was present at the launching of these boats, ordered ten horse and forty foot soldiers to embark in each, and hasten to cross the stream before their enemies should assemble to oppose them. The infantry were to row, and the horsemen to keep their saddles, that they might not lose time in mounting when they should reach the opposite shore.

Notwithstanding the silence observed by the Spaniards in launching their boats, they were discovered by a band of about five hundred savages drawn up on the other side. These gave a loud yell by way of spreading alarm, and rushed down to dispute the landing.

The Spaniards, fearing their enemies might collect in greater numbers, hurried to embark. De Soto would have gone in the first boat, but his followers prevented his exposing himself to this unnecessary hazard.

Those in the first bark bent to their oars and quickly reached the opposite bank, amid a shower of arrows, by which every Spaniard was more or less wounded. The first horseman who leaped on shore was Diego Garcia, and close behind him followed Gonzalo Silvestre; they charged the enemy together, put them to flight, and pursued them for more than two hundred paces. Fearful of being surrounded, they then turned their horses, and spurred back to their companions. In this manner, now charging, now retreating, these hardy cavaliers fought alone for a short time; in the fifth charge, however, being joined by some horsemen, they were enabled to keep the Indians in check.

The moment the infantry landed, they took shelter in a hamlet close by; this they dared not quit, as their number was very small, and every soldier more or less hurt. While this was passing, the second boat, in which De Soto had embarked, was carried down the current. The troops attempted to land, but found it impracticable on account of the steep banks; they were therefore compelled to pull up the stream, with great labour, to the landing place, which by this time was cleared of the enemy. The Governor, followed by seventy or eighty Spaniards, leaped on shore, and hastened to the relief of those who were fighting on the plain.

On their approach, the Indians retreated, and seeing the Spaniards had effected a landing, collected their forces, and

fortified themselves with palisades, in a swamp covered with reeds, from which they made frequent sallies. They were, however, as often driven back, and lanced by the cavalry. Thus the day passed in unimportant skirmishes. The troops finally crossed the river without molestation, and at night-fall every Indian disappeared.*

CHAPTER XLI.

1540. THE country in the neighbourhood of the river was level and fertile, dotted here and there with small hamlets, in which were quantities of maize and dried pulse. Having broken up the piraguas for the sake of the nails, the army resumed its march, and after travelling five days through a desert country, came to another river,† where the Indians were assembled to dispute the passage. Unwilling to expose his men to further loss, De Soto halted for two days, until a canoe had been constructed, in which he sent over an Indian messenger to the Cacique, with offers of peace and friendship. The savages seized their countryman, massacred him on the banks of the river in sight of the Spaniards, and then, as if triumphing in their barbarity, dispersed with horrid yells.‡

There being no longer any enemy to oppose his passage, De Soto conducted his troops across the stream, and then marched onward, until, on the 18th of December, he arrived at the village of Chicaza, from which the province took its name.§ It stood upon a gentle hill, stretching from north to south, being watered on each side by a small stream, and bordered by groves of walnut and oak trees.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 3. c. 35. Portuguese narrator, c. 20.

† Supposed to be the Tombigbe.

‡ Portuguese Narrative, c. 20.

§ Considering the nature of the country through which the Spanish army passed, agreeing with the modern accounts of that region, the direction of the march, the time, and the distance, it is very evident that this was the country of the Chickasaws, in the upper part of the state of Mississippi; and this village probably stood on the western bank of the Yazoo, a branch of the Mississippi, about eight leagues to the north-west of Mobile. Charlevoix remarks, "Garcilaso de la Vega parle des Chicachas dans son Histoire de la Conquête de la Floride, et il les place à peu près aumême endroit, ou ils sont encore présentement." — Vide Charlevoix, Jour. Hist. Let. 29. p. 408. — Belknap's Am. Biography, v. 1. p. 191. — Flint's Geog. and Hist. of the Mississippi, v. 1. p. 496.

The weather was now severe. A great deal of snow had fallen; this having frozen, the troops suffered extremely in their encampments. The Governor, therefore, determined to take up his winter quarters at Chicaza. For this purpose he commanded wood and straw to be brought from the neighbouring hamlets, in order to construct houses; for, notwithstanding there were two hundred in the village, they were too small to shelter the army.

The Spaniards remained nearly two months in this encampment without molestation, and enjoying some repose. The cavalry daily scoured the fields, and captured many natives, whom De Soto sent to the Cacique with presents and offers of peace and friendship. The Cacique returned favourable replies, promising, from day to day, to visit the camp, but as often excusing his delay, and sending presents of fruits, fish, and venison. The Governor gave the principal warriors of this chieftain a feast, at which some pork was served up. This the Indians had never before tasted, but found it so palatable and delicious, that from this time they prowled about the encampment every night, to steal and kill the swine. Two of them, who were caught in the act, were shot by order of the Governor, a third had his hands cut off, and was sent to the Cacique as an example to his countrymen.

About this time, four soldiers repaired to the dwelling of the Indian chief, about a league from the camp, without the Governor's permission, and carried off by force some skins and mantles, which so enraged the Indians, that many of them abandoned their homes. When de Soto heard of this violence, he had them all arrested; condemned the two ring-leaders, Francisco Osorio and one Fuentez, to death, and confiscated the goods of all the four culprits.

The priests and officers of the army supplicated the General to mitigate the sentence, and begged the life of Francisco Osorio. De Soto, however, was inflexible. The unfortunate criminals were led into the public square to be beheaded. At this moment a party of Indians arrived, having been sent by the Cacique, to make his complaints. This event, which seemed calculated to hasten the death of the criminals, was the means of their salvation. Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, instigated by Baltazar de Gallegos, and other officers of rank, gave a false interpretation of the complaints to the

inexorable Governor. He told him that the Indian Chief had sent these messengers to say, the soldiers had not offended him, and that he should consider it as a favour if they were pardoned and set at liberty. Upon this, De Soto pardoned the criminals.* On the other hand, Ortiz assured the Indians, that the soldiers who had injured them were in prison, and that the Governor would punish them in such a manner as should serve for an example to the whole Spanish army.

To the great annoyance of the Spaniards, the subjects of this Cacique kept up constant alarms at night, as if about to assail the Spanish cantonment; but the moment the soldiers sallied out, they took to flight. The Governor suspected, however, that these were but feigned attacks, intended to render his sentinels careless and put them off their guard, when a real attack should be made. He, therefore, exhorted his Camp-Master, Luis de Moscoso, to be unceasing in his vigilance, and maintain a strict watch upon the camp at night. His suspicions proved in the issue to be correct, though unfortunately they were but little heeded.

1541. A dark and cloudy night, when the wind was blowing furiously from the north, was chosen by the Cacique for a grand assault upon the village occupied by the Spaniards. Dividing his forces into three separate bodies, in order to attack three several points at the same time, he led on the centre in person, and approached in the dead of night, with such silence, as to arrive within a hundred paces of the Spanish sentinels without being perceived. Having learnt by his scouts that the two other divisions were equally advanced, he gave the signal of attack.

Immediately the air resounded with blasts of conch-shells, the rumbling of wooden drums, mingled with yells and war-whoops of savages, who rushed like demons to the assault. Many had lighted matches, resembling cords made of a vegetable substance, which when whirled in the air, burst into a flame; others had arrows tipped with the same inflammable matter. These they directed against the houses, which being of reeds and straw, instantly took fire, and, the wind blowing strongly, were soon wrapped in flames.

The Spaniards, although surprised by this sudden and furious assault, rushed out to defend themselves. De Soto,

* Portuguese Narration, c. 20.

who always slept in his doublet and hose, that he might be prepared against such emergencies, clasped on his casque, drew on a surcoat of quilted cotton an inch and a half thick, the best defence against the enemy's arrows, seized buckler and lance, mounted his horse, and dashed fearlessly into the midst of his foes. Ten or twelve horsemen followed him, though not immediately.

With their wonted spirit, the soldiers started up in every direction to repel the Indians; but they fought under great disadvantages. The strong wind blowing the flames and smoke directly in their faces extremely disconcerted them. Some were obliged to crawl out of their quarters on all fours to escape the fire; some, bewildered, fled from house to house; others rushed out into the plain; whilst some flew to rescue the sick and wounded, who were in a dwelling apart. Before succour arrived, however, many of these latter had perished in the fierce conflagration.

The cavalry had not time to arm themselves or saddle their steeds. Some succeeded in rescuing theirs from the flames; others, who had fastened up their horses with iron chains, because they were restive from high mettle, not having time to release them, were obliged to leave them to their fate and fly for their own lives. A few who were enabled to mount, galloped to the assistance of the Governor, who, with a scanty band of followers had been engaged some time with the Indians. The other two bodies of the enemy entering the village, simultaneously attacked the Spaniards on each flank; and, aided by the fire and smoke, made dreadful havock.

Forty or fifty soldiers stationed at the eastern end of the village, where the fire and the battle raged most fiercely, fled into the fields. Nuño Tobar rushed after them sword in hand, having in the hurry left unbuckled his coat of mail. "Turn, soldiers! turn!" he cried; "whither are you flying? Here is neither Cordova nor Seville to give you refuge. Your safety lies in your courage and the vigour of your arms, not in flight." At this moment thirty soldiers, from a part of the village which the flames had not reached, came up to intercept the fugitives. They taunted their recreant comrades with their shameful flight, and inducing them to join forces, they hastened together to renew the combat.

At this time, Andres de Vasconcelos, with twenty-four

chosen cavaliers of his company, all Portuguese hidalgos, most of whom had served as horsemen in the wars on the African frontier, charged the enemy's main body. He was accompanied by Nuño Tobar on foot. The fury of their attack forced the savages to retire.

This timely reinforcement gave new courage to the handful of Spaniards, who, headed by the Governor, were fighting in that quarter. De Soto had marked an Indian warrior who had fought with great fury. Closing with him, he gave him a thrust with his lance, but leaning with all his force upon the right stirrup to repeat the blow, the saddle, which had been left ungirt in the confusion of the assault, slipped off, and De Soto fell into the midst of his enemies. The Spaniards, seeing the imminent peril of their General, both horse and foot dashed forward to his rescue, and kept the Indians at bay until he was extricated and his steed saddled. De Soto instantly vaulted upon his back, and plunged again into the fight.

The Indians, at length completely vanquished, fled from the field. De Soto pursued them with his troopers as long as they could be distinguished by the light of the burning village; then ordering the recall to be sounded, returned to ascertain his loss. He found this greater than he had imagined. Forty Spaniards had fallen in the conflict. Among the dead was a Spanish woman, the wife of a worthy soldier, and the only female who had accompanied the army. Her husband had left her behind when he rushed forth to fight. She had escaped from the house, but returned to save some pearls; the flames cut off her second retreat, and she was afterwards found burnt to death.

Fifty horses also had perished and many were wounded. Above twenty had been either burnt or shot with arrows in the houses where their masters were obliged to leave them tied up. The darts had been skilfully aimed at the most vital parts. One horse had two shafts through the heart from opposite directions. Another, one of the broadest and heaviest in the army, had been shot by such a vigorous arm, that the arrow, passed through both shoulders, the head protruding beyond.

Another loss which grieved the Spaniards, was that of the swine which they had brought with them to stock their projected settlement. These, having been shut up in an

enclosure roofed with straw, nearly all perished in the flames.

In examining the bodies of those Indians who had perished in the battle, the Spaniards found three cords wound round several of them. These, it is said, they had brought to secure their anticipated spoils; one being intended to bind a Spanish captive, another to lead off a horse, and the third to tie up a hog. The story, however, savours strongly of camp gossip.

This disastrous battle, following the ruinous one of Mauvila, increased the Governor's gloom and exasperation of spirit. Having made strict enquiry into the night attack, and the circumstances which had enabled the enemy to approach undiscovered and surprise them so fatally, he attributed it to gross negligence on the part of Luis de Moscoso in placing sentinels, and going the rounds. The tardy arrival of Moscoso on the fatal battle-field of Mauvila had before excited his indignation, which was now renewed, and in this fresh cause of vexation, forgetting his feelings of friendship for an old brother in arms, he deposed Moscoso from his post of Master of the Camp, and appointed in his place Baltazar de Gallegos.*

CHAPTER XLII.

1541. THREE days after this disastrous battle, the Spaniards shifted their encampment to a more advantageous position called Chicacilla,† about a league distant. Here they set up a forge, and employed themselves in newly tempering their swords, which had been injured by the fire, and in making saddles, shields, and lances to replace those consumed.

In this village they passed the remainder of the winter, suffering grievously from extreme cold. They were in wretched plight, having saved no clothing from the late conflagration except what they chanced to have on their backs. When the savages learnt the extent of the havock they had made, their fierce spirits were aroused anew, and they hovered every night round the camp, making repeated assaults and causing continual alarms. The Spaniards were obliged to be

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 3. c. 36, 37. Portuguese Narrative, c. 20.

† This is a little Chicaza.

constantly upon their guard, formed into four different squadrons with sentries posted, lest the Indians should fire the houses as they had done those of Chicaza. They maintained a vigilant watch, for the savages burst upon them at all hours. In these nocturnal skirmishes many were killed and wounded on both sides.

Every morning De Soto despatched four or five parties of horse, in different directions, to scour the country; these cut down every Indian they encountered, and always returned at sunset, with the assurance that there was not one remaining within four leagues. In four or five hours afterwards, however, hordes of savages were again prepared to attack them. It seemed almost incredible that such hosts should have assembled in so short a time.

One night a band of natives warily approached the place where Captain Juan de Guzman was posted, with his company. De Guzman perceiving them by the light of some blazing faggots, sprang upon his horse, and followed by five troopers and a few foot, charged them vigorously. De Guzman, who was a cavalier of unflinching spirit, though of a delicate form, singled out an Indian in the van-guard, who carried a banner, and made a lunge at him with his lance. The Indian avoiding the blow, caught the lance with his right hand, wrested it from De Guzman, then seized him by the collar and giving him a violent jerk, hurled him from the saddle to his feet—all this while holding the banner in his left hand.

The soldiers witnessing the imminent danger of their leader, rushed forward, slew the Indian, and routed the whole band of savages. The troopers dashed after them in hot pursuit, and the ground favouring the movements of their horses, the Spaniards would have signally avenged their late disaster had not their career been suddenly arrested by the cry of "To the camp! to the camp!" At this startling summons, wheeling about, they galloped back to the encampment, and thus the fugitives escaped. The alarm had been raised by a monk, who was fearful that the troopers, in their eagerness of pursuit, might fall into some ambush of the enemy. Forty Indians fell in this affray. The Spaniards lost two of their horses, and two were wounded.

The army remained in this encampment until the end of March. Besides being unceasingly harassed by their enemies,

they suffered bitterly from cold, which was rigorous in the extreme; especially to men who had to pass every night under arms, with scarcely any clothing.

In this extremity, however, they were relieved by the ingenuity of one of the common soldiers. He succeeded in making a matting, four fingers thick, of long soft grass, or dried ivy, one half of which served as a mattress, and the other half was turned over as a blanket.

These rustic beds were brought every night to the main guard, and with their aid the soldiers on duty were enabled to endure the severe cold of the winter nights. The army also found abundant provisions of maize and dried fruits in the neighbourhood.*

On the first of April, the army broke up their encampment. They travelled four leagues the first day, through an open country, thickly studded with small hamlets, and halted in a plain beyond the territory of Chicaza; vainly fancying that, having quitted their province, the Indians would no longer molest them.

A strong party of horse and foot, commanded by Juan de Añasco, which was foraging for provisions, came in sight of an Indian fortress, garrisoned by a large body of savages, who looked like devils rather than men. Their bodies were painted in stripes, white, black, and red, appearing as if clothed with fantastic garments. Their faces were blackened, and they had red circles round their eyes, which gave them a ferocious aspect. Some wore feathers upon their heads, and others horns. On seeing the Spaniards, they sallied forth, shouting, yelling, and beating wooden drums.

De Añasco, retreating to an open field within a cross-bow shot of the fortress, drew up his cross-bowmen with their bucklers before the horses to protect them. In this way he received the light skirmishing assaults of the Indians. The latter, seeing the numerical inferiority of the Spaniards, taunted them from a distance, by a singular piece of mummery. Having kindled a great fire in front of their fort, they pretended to knock one of their companions on the head with a club, and then swung him by the feet and shoulders, as if they would throw him into the flames: thereby giving the Spaniards to understand the treatment they were to expect. Juan de Añasco was of too irritable a temperament to bear

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 3. c. 39. Portuguese Narrative, c. 21.

such taunts patiently, but being sensible that his force was insufficient to attack the fortress, he despatched three troopers to the Governor, to entreat a reinforcement.

Leaving one-third of the infantry and cavalry to guard the camp, De Soto immediately marched out with the remainder, to assault the fort, which was called Alibamo.* It was built in the form of a quadrangle, fenced with strong palisades. The sides were each four hundred paces in length. Within, the area was traversed from side to side by two other palisades, dividing it into three separate parts. In the outer wall were three portals, so low and narrow that a man could not enter on horseback. Beyond these, there was a second wall, with three entrances, and behind this a third; so that if the outer wall were gained, the garrison could retreat to the second, and so on. In the last wall were likewise three portals, opening upon a narrow and deep river, that flowed in the rear of the fort.† So high were the banks of this stream that it was exceedingly difficult to clamber up on foot; they were consequently inaccessible to horses. A few rude, dilapidated bridges were thrown across the river, affording a difficult passage.

The Indians had constructed their fortress in this manner, that the Spaniards might not avail themselves of their horses, but be obliged to contend with them on foot; in which mode of encounter they fancied they were not only equal, but superior to their enemies.

De Soto, having carefully reconnoitred the fortress, ordered a hundred of the best armed horsemen to dismount, and forming three squadrons, advanced three abreast, and commenced the attack; whilst the foot, who were less completely cased in defensive armour, supported their rear. The squadrons were ordered to attack the three entrances simultaneously. Juan de Guzman led on one of the squadrons, Alonso Romo de Cardenosa another, and Gonzalo Silvestre the third.

The Indians, who had until this moment remained shut up in their fortress, perceiving the preparations which the Spaniards were making for the assault, sallied out to battle, a hundred men from each portal. At the first discharge of

* We give the name according to the Inca. The Portuguese narrator calls it Alimamu.

† Supposed to be the Yazoo river.

their arrows, Diego de Castro, Luis Bravo, and Francisco de Figueroa, were brought to the ground mortally wounded. All three were pierced in the thigh with shafts barbed with flint; for the savages having gained some experience during their warfare with the Spaniards, always aimed at the thigh, which was never guarded. The Spaniards, seeing their companions fall, shouted to one another to rush in, and leave the Indians no time to gall them with their arrows; then charging furiously, they drove the enemy before them, to the very portals of the fortress.

While Juan de Añasco and Andres de Vasconcelos attacked the savages on one flank, De Soto, with twenty horse, charged upon the other. As the Governor was spurring onward, an arrow struck him upon his casque with such force, that it rebounded a pike's length in the air, and De Soto confessed afterwards that it made his eyes flash fire. Pressed by the united shock of horse and foot, the Indians tried to reach the entrances of their fort, but these were so narrow, that a great number were slaughtered without the walls. The Spaniards rushed in with them pell mell.

The carnage within the fortress was dreadful. The savages were crowded together, and the Spaniards, remembering the injuries they had received from them during the past winter, gave vent to their rage, and massacred them without mercy. As they wore defensive armour, they were easily despatched. Many, trusting to their agility, leaped from the wall into the plains, and falling into the hands of their enemies, were instantly slain. Many escaped to the bridges by the portals in the rear; but in their haste to cross, several were jostled into the river which flowed beneath. Others, pressed by their foes, threw themselves from the banks and swam across. In a short time, the fortress was abandoned and in the power of the Spaniards; but those Indians who reached the opposite bank formed themselves in battle array.

One of the savages who had escaped, desirous of showing his skill with the bow and arrow, separated himself from his companions, and shouted to the Spaniards, giving them to understand by signs and words, that he challenged any archer to come out and have a shot with him, in order to prove which was the better marksman. Upon this, Juan de Salinas, an Asturian hidalgo, who, with some companions,

had sheltered himself among trees from the arrows, stepped forth, and walking down to the river bank, took his stand opposite to the Indian. One of his companions called to him to wait until he should come to guard him with his shield; but Salinas refused to take any advantage of his enemy. He placed an arrow in his cross-bow, while the Indian also selected one from his quiver, and both drew at the same moment.

The dart of Juan de Salinis took effect, and entered the Indian's breast. He would have fallen, but was received in the arms of his companions, who bore him away more dead than alive. The Indian's arrow pierced the Spaniard in the nape of the neck, and remained crossed in the wound. Salinas returned with it in this state to his comrades, well pleased with his success; the comrades of the fallen Indian allowing him to depart without molestation, as the challenge had been man to man.

The Adelantado determined to punish the impudence and daring of these Indians, called on the cavalry to follow him; and crossing the river by an easy ford above the fort, galloped out upon the plain; then, charging the savages, he pursued them for more than a league, with great slaughter; and had not night interposed, not one would have survived to tell the disastrous tale. As it was, the carnage was very great.

When the Spaniards gave up the pursuit, they returned to their encampment and halted four days, in order to afford relief to the wounded. Fifteen subsequently died. Among these were the three cavaliers who had fallen at the commencement of the battle. They were greatly lamented by their companions, for they were noble, young, and valiant;—not one of them had reached his twenty-fifth year.*

CHAPTER XLIII.

1541. AFTER four days the Spaniards departed from their encampment at Alibamo, still marching towards the north, to avoid the sea. For seven days they traversed an uninhabited country, full of forests and swamps, where they had sometimes to swim their horses.† At length they came in

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 3. c. 35. Portuguese Narrative, c. 20.

† Portuguese Relation, c. 22.

sight of a village, called Chisca, situated near a wide river. As this was the largest they had discovered in Florida, they called it Rio Grande; it was the same now called the Mississippi.* The Indians of this province knew nothing of the strangers' approach, owing to their unceasing warfare with the natives of Chicaza, and the country lying between them being unpeopled. The moment the Spaniards descried the village they entered it, in a disorderly manner, took many Indians prisoners of either sex and of all ages, and pillaged the houses.

The dwelling of the Cacique, which served as a fortress, stood on a high artificial mound, on one side of the village. The only ascent to it was by two ladders. Many of the Indians took refuge there, whilst others fled to a wood, between the village and the river. Chisca, the chieftain of the province, was very old, and lying ill in his bed. Hearing the tumult and shouts, however, he quitted his couch and sallied forth. Beholding the attack upon his village and the capture of his vassals, he seized a tomahawk and began to descend in a furious rage, threatening extermination to all who had dared to enter his domains without permission. With all these bravadoes, the Cacique, beside being infirm and exceedingly old, was of very diminutive stature;—the most miserable little Indian the Spaniards had seen in all their marchings. He was animated, however, by the remembrance of the deeds and exploits of his youth, for he had been a doughty warrior, and ruled over a vast province.

The women and attendants of the Cacique surrounded him, and with tears and entreaties, prevailed upon him to retire; at the same time, those who came from the village informed him that the enemy were men, such as they had never before seen or heard of, and that they came upon strange animals of great size and wonderful agility. "If you desire to fight with them," said they, "to avenge this injury, it will be better to summon together the warriors of the neighbourhood, and await a more fitting opportunity. In the meantime, let us put on the semblance of friendship, and not by any inconsiderate rashness, provoke our destruction."

* The Inca, on the authority of Juan Coles, one of the followers of De Soto, says that the Indian name of this river was Chucagua. The Portuguese narrator says, that in one place it was called Tumaliseu, in another, Tapata, in another, Mico; and at that part where it enters the sea, Ri. It is probable it had different names among the different Indian tribes. The village of Chisca is called Quizquiz, by the Portuguese historian.

With these and similar arguments, the women and attendants of the Cacique, prevented his sallying forth to battle. He continued, however, in great wrath, and when the Governor sent him a message, offering peace, he returned an answer refusing all intercourse, and breathing nothing but vengeance.

De Soto and his followers, wearied out with the harassing warfare of the past winter, were very desirous of peace. Having pillaged the village and offended the Cacique, they were in a dilemma; accordingly, they sent him many gentle and soothing messages. Added to their disinclination for war, they observed, that during the three hours they had halted in the village, nearly four thousand well-armed warriors had rallied round their Chief, and they feared, that if such a multitude could assemble in so short a time, there must be large reinforcements in reserve. They perceived, moreover, that the situation of the village was as advantageous to the Indians as unfavourable to them; for the plains around being covered with trees and intersected by numerous streams, would impede the movements of their cavalry. But more than all this, they had learned from sad experience, that these incessant conflicts did not in the least profit them. Day after day, men and horses were slain; in the midst of a hostile country, and far from home or hope of succour, their number was gradually diminishing.

The Indians held a council to discuss the messages of the strangers. Many were for war: they were enraged at the imprisonment of their wives and children, and the pillage of their property; to recover which, according to their fierce notions, the only resource was arms. Others, who had not lost anything, were nevertheless hostile to an accommodation, from a natural inclination for fighting. They wished to exhibit their prowess, and to try what kind of men those were, who carried such strange arms. The more pacific savages, however, advised that the offered peace should be accepted, as the surest means of recovering their wives, children, and effects. They added, that the enemy might burn their villages, and lay waste their fields, at a time when their grain was almost ripening, and thus add greatly to their calamities. The valour of these strangers, said they, is sufficiently evident; for men who have passed through so many enemies, cannot be otherwise than brave.

This latter council prevailed. The Cacique dissembling

his anger, replied to the envoy, that since the Spaniards desired peace, he would grant it, and allow them to halt in the village, and give them food, on condition that they would immediately set his subjects free and restore their effects. He also stipulated that they should not enter into his presence. If these terms were accepted, he said, he would be friendly: if not he defied them to the combat.

The Spaniards readily agreed to these conditions. The prisoners and plunder were restored, and the Indians departed from the village, leaving food in their dwellings for the Spaniards, who remained here six days to tend the sick. On the last day, with the permission of the Cacique, De Soto visited him, and thanked him for his friendship and hospitality, and on the following morning the army resumed their march.

CHAPTER XLIV.

1541. DEPARTING from Chisca, the army travelled by slow journeys of three leagues a day, on account of the sick and wounded. They followed the windings of the river until the fourth day, when they came to an opening in the thickets. Hitherto, they had been threading a vast forest, bordering the stream, the banks of which were so high on both sides, that they could neither descend nor mount them. De Soto found it necessary to halt in this plain twenty days, for the purpose of building boats or piraguas to cross the river; for on the opposite bank a great number of Indian warriors were assembled to defend the passage, well armed, and with a fleet of canoes.

The morning after the Governor had encamped, some of the natives visited him. Advancing, without speaking a word, and turning their faces to the east, they made a profound genuflection to the sun; then facing to the west, they made another to the moon, and concluded with a similar, but less humble reverence to De Soto. They said they came in the name of their Cacique and in that of all his subjects, to bid the Spaniards welcome, and to offer their friendship and services; adding, that they were desirous to see what kind of men the strangers were, as there was a tradition handed down from their ancestors, that a white people would

come and conquer their country.* The Adelantado said many kind things in reply, and dismissed them, well pleased with their courteous reception. The Cacique sent him repeated messages of kindness, but never visited the encampment; excusing himself on account of ill-health. His subjects aided the Spaniards with much cheerfulness; while the Indians from the opposite side of the river, harassed them continually; crossing over in their canoes, and discharging arrows at them, while they were at work. The archers and cross-bowmen, however, as on a former occasion, concealed themselves in pits, until the enemy drew nigh; then suddenly rising, dispersed them with great slaughter.

One day, the Spaniards perceived a fleet of two hundred canoes descending the river. These canoes were filled with armed Indians, painted after their wild fashion, adorned with feathers of every colour, and carrying shields in their hands, made of the buffalo hide, with which some sheltered the rowers, while others stood on the prow and poop of the canoes with their bows and arrows. The canoes of the Cacique and chief warriors were decorated with fanciful awnings, under which they sat and gave their orders to those who rowed. "It was a pleasing sight," says the Portuguese narrator, "to behold these wild savages in their canoes, which were neatly made and of great size, and with their awnings, coloured feathers, and waving standards, appeared like a fleet of galleys."

They paddled to within a stone's throw of the shore where the Governor was standing, surrounded by his officers. The Chief addressing him, professed that he came to offer his services, and to assure him of obedience, as he had been informed that the Spanish leader was the most powerful prince of the whole earth. De Soto returned him thanks, and begged him to land, that they might converse more conveniently. The Cacique made no answer, but sent three canoes on shore with presents of fruit, and bread made of the pulp of a certain kind of plum†. The Governor again importuned the savage to land, but seeing him hesitate, and suspecting treachery, he marshalled his men in order of battle. Upon this, the Indians turned their prows and fled. The

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 22.

† The persimmon. Loaves are still made of this wild fruit among the Indians and settlers of the West.

cross-bowmen sent a flight of arrows after them, and killed five or six of their number. They retreated in good order, covering the rowers with their shields. Several times after this, they landed to attack the soldiers, as was supposed, but the moment the Spaniards charged them, they fled to their canoes.

At the end of twenty days four piraguas were built and launched. About three hours before dawn De Soto ordered them to be manned and four troopers of tried courage to go in each.

The rowers pulled strongly; when within fifty yards of the shore, the troopers dashed into the water, and meeting with no opposition from the enemy, easily effected a landing and made themselves masters of the pass. Two hours before the sun went down, the whole army had crossed the Mississippi.

The river in this place, says the Portuguese historian, was half a league from one shore to the other, so that a man standing still could scarcely be discerned from the opposite bank. It was of great depth, of wonderful rapidity, and very muddy; besides being always filled with floating trees and timber carried down by the force of the current.*

Breaking up the boats as before, to preserve the nails, the Spaniards proceeded onward four days through a wilderness intersected in many places by morasses which they were obliged to ford. On the fifth day, from the summit of a high ridge, they descried a large village, containing about four hundred dwellings. It was situated on the banks of a river, the borders of which, as far as the eye could reach, were covered with luxuriant fields of maize interspersed with groves of fruit trees.† The natives, who had already received notice of the strangers' approach, thronged out in crowds to receive them, freely offering their houses and effects for their use.

In a short time two Indian chiefs arrived with a train of warriors bearing a welcome from their Cacique and an offer of his services. The Governor received them very courteously, and treated them with such kindness that they went away well pleased.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 22. This place where De Soto and his army crossed the Mississippi was probably the lowest Chickasaw Bluff, one of the ancient crossing places between the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth parallel of latitude.

† Probably the river St. Francis.

The Spaniards finding abundance of food for man and horse remained six days in the village which bore the name of Casquin or Caqui, as did the whole province and its Cacique.*

Resuming their journey, they marched through a populous and free country, where the land was more elevated and the soil less alluvial than any they had yet seen on the borders of the Mississippi. The fields were exuberantly fruitful; the pecan nut, the red and gray plum, and mulberry trees grew there in abundance.† In two days they came to the chief town, where the Cacique resided. It stood on the same side of the river, about seven leagues above, in a very fertile and populous neighbourhood. Here the Spaniards were well received by the Cacique, who made De Soto a present of mantles,‡ skins, and fish, and invited him to lodge in his habitation, which was on a high artificial hill on one side of the village, and consisted of twelve or thirteen large houses for the accommodation of his numerous family of women and attendants. The Governor declined the invitation, for fear of incommoding him. A part of the army was quartered in houses, the remainder lodged in bowers, which the Indians quickly built of green branches, in groves close by. It was now the month of May, and as the weather was becoming oppressively warm, the tenants of these rustic bowers found them truly delightful.

CHAPTER XLV.

1541. THE army remained tranquil in the village during three days, with much good feeling on both sides. On the morning of the fourth, the Cacique, accompanied by all his principal subjects, came into the presence of De Soto and making a profound obeisance, "Señor," said he, "as you are superior to us in prowess, and surpass us in arms, we

* Supposed to be the same as the Kaskaskias Indians, who at that time peopled a province south-west of the Missouri. Vide Nuttall's Arkansas, p. 82, 250, 251. Charlevoix, *Journal Historique*, v. 3. let. 28.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 23. Supposed to be the country of the Little Prairie and that chain of high land extending to New Madrid; in the vicinity of which are to be seen many aboriginal remains. Vide Nuttall's Arkansas, p. 251.

‡ These mantles were fabricated from coarse threads of the bark of trees and nettles.

likewise believe that your God is better than our god ! These you behold before you are the chief warriors of my dominions. We supplicate you to pray to your God to send us rain, for our fields are parched for want of water !”*

De Soto replied, that although he and all his followers were but sinners, yet they would supplicate God, the father of mercies, to show mercy unto their heathen brethren. Then, in the presence of the Cacique, he ordered his chief carpenter, Francisco, the Genoese, to hew down the highest and largest pine tree in the vicinity and construct a cross.

Accordingly, a tree was immediately felled of such immense size, that a hundred men could not raise it from the ground. Having formed a perfect cross, the Spaniards erected it on a high hill on the banks of the river, which served the Indians as a watch-tower, overlooking every eminence in the vicinity. Every thing being prepared in two days, the Governor ordered that the next morning all should march to it in solemn procession, except an armed squadron of horse and foot, who were commanded to be on the alert to protect the army.

The Cacique walked beside the Governor, and many of the savage warriors mingled with the Spaniards. Before them went a choir of priests and friars chanting the litany, to which the soldiers responded. The procession, in which were more than a thousand persons, both Spaniards and Indians, wound slowly and solemnly along until it arrived before the cross, where all fell upon their knees. Two or three prayers were now offered up : the multitude then rose, and two by two approached the holy emblem, bent the knee before it, worshipped and kissed it.

On the opposite shore of the river were collected fifteen or twenty thousand savages of either sex and of all ages, to witness the singular but imposing ceremony. With their arms extended and their hands raised, they watched the movements of the Spaniards. Ever and anon they elevated their eyes to heaven, and made signs with their faces and hands, as if asking God to listen to the Christians' prayer. They then raised a low wailing cry, like people in excessive grief, which was echoed by the plaintive murmurings of their children's voices. De Soto and his followers were

* The Portuguese narrator says, that the Cacique besought him to restore to sight two blind men he had brought with him.

moved to tenderness to behold in a strange land, a savage people worshipping with such deep humility and tears, the emblem of our redemption. The procession returned observing the same order; the priests chaunted *Te Deum laudamus*, and with this closed the solemnities of the day.

God, in his mercy, says the Spanish chronicler, willing to show these heathens that he listeneth unto those who call upon him in truth, in the middle of the ensuing night, sent down a plenteous rain upon the earth, to the great joy of the Indians.*

The Cacique with his warriors, astonished and overjoyed at this un hoped-for blessing, formed a procession in imitation of the Christians, and repaired to De Soto to express gratitude for the kindness his God had shown them through his intercession. The Governor answered them, that they must give thanks to God, who created the heavens and earth, and was the bestower of these and other far greater mercies.

It is an interesting reflection, that nearly three centuries ago, the cross, the type of our divine religion, was planted on the banks of the Mississippi, whose silent forests were awakened by the Christian's hymn of gratitude and praise. The effect was vivid but transitory. The "voice cried in the wilderness," reached and was answered by every heart, but died away and was forgotten, and was not to be heard again in that savage region for many generations. It was as if a lightning gleam had broken for a moment upon a benighted world, startling it with sudden effulgence, only to leave it in tenfold gloom. The real dawning was yet afar off from the valley of the Mississippi.

As the army had been already quartered nine or ten days in this village, De Soto gave orders for them to prepare to march the following morning. The Cacique, who was about fifty years of age, obtained permission of the Governor to accompany him with a train of warriors and domestics; the one to escort his troops, the other to carry his supplies, as they would have to traverse a wilderness; also to clear the road, gather wood for their encampment, and fodder for their horses. The Cacique's true object, however, was to avail himself of the presence of the Spaniards to wreak vengeance on a neighbouring chieftain called Capaha.† A war had existed

* Las Casas, L. 4. c. 6.

† In the Portuguese narrative, the name of this Cacique is spelt Pacaha.

between their respective tribes for several generations ; but the present Cacique of Capaha had gained the ascendancy, and kept Casquin in continual subjection by the superiority of his forces.

In the morning, Casquin assembled his followers to escort the Governor. He had three thousand Indians laden with supplies, and with the baggage of the Spanish army ;—they were all armed with bows and arrows. But besides these, he was accompanied by five thousand of his choicest warriors, well armed, grotesquely painted, and decorated with war-plumes. With these he secretly meditated a signal revenge on his enemy, Capaha.

With the Governor's permission, he took the lead under pretence of clearing the road of any lurking foe, and of preparing every thing for the Spanish encampment. He divided his men into squadrons, and marched in good military order, a quarter of a league in advance. By night he posted sentinels in the same manner as the Spaniards.

In this way they travelled for three days, when they came to a great swamp, miry on the borders, with a lake in the centre, too deep to be forded, and forming a kind of gulf on the Mississippi, into which it emptied itself.* Across this piece of water Casquin's Indians constructed a rude bridge of trunks of trees laid upon posts driven into the bottom of the lake, with a row of stakes above the bridge, for those who crossed to hold by. The horses were obliged to swim, and were got over with great difficulty on account of the mire. This swamp separated the two hostile provinces of Casquin and Capaha. The Spaniards were nearly the whole day crossing it, and encamped in beautiful meadows about half a league beyond.

After travelling two more days, early on the third day they arrived at some elevated ridges, whence they descried the principal town of Capaha, the frontier post and defence of the province.†

It contained five hundred large houses, situated on a high ground which commanded the surrounding country, being nearly encircled by a deep moat fifty paces broad, and where the moat did not extend, was defended by a strong wall of timber and plaster, such as has already been described. The moat was filled with water by means of a canal, cut from the

* Inca, Lib. 4. c. 7. Portuguese Relation, c. 23.

† This was the most northern point reached by De Soto on the Mississippi.

Mississippi, three leagues distant. The canal was deep and sufficiently wide for two canoes to pass abreast, without touching each others' paddles. Being filled with fish, it supplied all the wants of the village and army.

Capaha had received intelligence by his scouts of the formidable allies who accompanied his old antagonist, Casquin. His own warriors were dispersed, and not sufficient in number to resist such additional force. As soon, therefore, as he saw the enemy approaching, he sprang into a canoe on the moat, and passing along the canal into the Grand River, took refuge in a strong island. Such of his people as had canoes followed him, others fled into the neighbouring woods, while some lingered in the village.

Casquin marching, as usual, in advance, arrived with his warriors at the village some time before the Spaniards. Meeting with no resistance, he entered it warily, suspecting an ambuscade. This gave time for many loiterers to escape.

As soon as Casquin ascertained that the village was at his mercy, he gave full vent to his vengeance. His warriors scoured the place, killed and scalped all the men they met to the number of a hundred and fifty; plundered the houses, making captives many boys, women and children. Among the captives were two of the numerous wives of Capaha; they were young and beautiful, and had been prevented from embarking with the Cacique, in consequence of the confusion occasioned by the enemy's approach.

The hostility of Casquin and his warriors was not confined to the living, but extended, likewise, to the dead. They broke into the grand mausoleum, in the public square, which the Indians hold so sacred. Here were deposited the remains of numerous ancestors both of the Cacique and great men of his tribe, and here were treasured the trophies gained from Casquin's people in many a past battle. These trophies they tore from the walls and stripped the sepulchre of all its ornaments and treasures. They then threw down the wooden coffins in which were deposited the remains of the dead, trampled upon the bodies, scattered about the bones, and wreaked upon them all kinds of indignities, in revenge for past injuries, which the deceased had inflicted upon their tribe. At the entrance of the sepulchre, stuck on the ends of pikes, were heads of many of their warriors, slain in former battles. These they bore away with them,

replacing them with those of their enemies whom they had just massacred. They would have completed their triumph by setting fire to the mausoleum and to the whole village, but were restrained by a fear of offending the Governor. All these outrages were perpetrated before the Spaniards had reached the place.

De Soto was much concerned at the cruel ravage committed by his allies. He immediately sent envoys to Capaha, to the island on which he had fortified himself, with offers of friendship. These were indignantly rejected; and the Governor learnt that Capaha, breathing vengeance, had summoned all his warriors.

Finding every effort to conciliate the Chieftain fruitless, De Soto determined to attack him in his strong hold. Casquin provided above seventy canoes for the purpose; and an invasion of the island was made by two hundred Spaniards and three thousand Indians.

The island was covered with a thick forest of trees and underwood, and the Cacique had fortified himself strongly with barricades. The Spaniards effected a landing with great difficulty; gained the first barrier by hard fighting, and pressed on to the second within which the women and children were sheltered. Here the warriors of Capaha fought with redoubled fury, and struck such dismay into the people of Casquin that they abandoned their Spanish allies and fled to their canoes; nay, they would have carried off the canoes of the Spaniards also, had there not been a couple of soldiers in each to guard them.

The Spaniards, thus deserted by their pusillanimous allies, and being overpowered by numbers, began to retreat in good order to their canoes. They would all, however, have been cut off had not Capaha restrained the fury of his warriors, and suffered the enemy to regain the shore and embark unmolested.

This unexpected forbearance on the part of the savage chieftain, surprised the Adelantado. On the following day four principal warriors arrived on an embassy from Capaha. They came with great ceremony; bowed to the sun, the moon, and the Governor; but took no notice of Casquin who was present, treating him with utter contempt and disdain. In the name of their Cacique they prayed oblivion of the past and amity for the future, declaring that their Chief-

tain was ready to come in person and do homage. The General received them with the utmost affability, assured them of his friendship, and sent them away well pleased with their reception.

Casquin was vexed at this negotiation, and would fain have prolonged hostilities between the Spaniards and his ancient enemies; but the Governor was as much charmed with the frankness and magnanimity of one Cacique as he had been displeased with the craft and cruelty of the other. He issued orders forbidding any one to injure the natives of the province or their possessions.

In order to appease the Governor for the dastardly flight of his warriors, Casquin made him presents of fish, together with mantles and skins of various kinds; and moreover, brought him one of his daughters as a handmaid. De Soto, however, was not thoroughly to be reconciled. He permitted the Cacique to remain with him, and to retain a sufficient number of vassals for his personal services, but obliged him to send home all his warriors.*

CHAPTER XLVI.

1541. On the following morning, Capaha came to De Soto at the village attended by a train of a hundred warriors decorated with beautiful plumes and with mantles of skins. He was about twenty-six years old, of a handsome person and noble demeanour. When he entered the village his first care was to visit the sepulchre of his ancestors. The indignities that had been offered to their remains were such as an Indian feels most acutely. The Cacique, however, concealed the grief and rage that burnt within his bosom. Gathering the scattered bones in silence, he kissed them, returned them reverently to their coffins; and having arranged the sepulchre, as well as circumstances would permit, proceeded to the Governor's quarters.

De Soto came forth to receive him, accompanied by Casquin. The Cacique paid homage to the Governor, acknowledging himself his vassal, but took no notice whatever of his old adversary, Casquin. De Soto embraced Capaha as a friend, and he was honourably treated by all the officers.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 4. c. 7, 8, 9. Portuguese Narrative, c. 24.

The Cacique answered numerous questions concerning his territories with great clearness and intelligence. When the Governor had ceased his interrogations, and there was a pause, Capaha could no longer restrain his smothered indignation. Turning suddenly to his rival: "Doubtless, Casquin," said he, "you exult in having revenged your past defeats; a thing you could never have effected with your own forces only. You may thank these strangers for it. They will go, but we shall remain in our own country as we were before. Pray to the sun and moon to send us good weather, then!"

The Governor interposed, and endeavoured to produce a reconciliation between the Chieftains. In deference to him, Capaha repressed his wrath and embraced his adversary; but there passed between them occasional glances that portended a future storm, and the proud Capaha was constantly on the alert on all points of ceremony and precedence, making Casquin give way to his superior pretensions.

The Governor and the rival Caciques partook of a repast together, after which the two young and beautiful wives of Capaha, who had been captured, were brought to be restored to him. He received them with many acknowledgments for the generosity thus shown towards him, and then offered them as presents to the Governor. On De Soto's declining to accept them, Capaha begged that he would give them to some of his officers or soldiers, or to whom he pleased, as they could not be admitted again into the household of their prince, nor remain in his territories. The Governor, perceiving that they were considered dishonoured, was persuaded to receive them under his protection, knowing the laws and customs of these savages to be cruel in the extreme when the chastity of their wives was concerned.*

In the town of Capaha, the Spaniards found a great variety of skins of deer, panthers, bears, and wild cats. These they converted into garments, of which they stood in great need, many being nearly naked. They made moc-

* The Portuguese historian says that these beautiful females were the sisters of the Cacique Capaha, and that he begged De Soto to accept them and marry them as pledges of his affection. The one, he added, was called Macanoche, and the other Mochifa. They were both handsome and well shaped; especially the former, whose features were beautiful, her countenance expressive, and her air majestic. We have followed the account of the Inca, Garcilaso de la Vega.

casons of deer-skins, and used the bear-skins as cloaks. They found Indian bucklers formed of buffalo hides, which the troops took possession of.

While quartered in the village, they were abundantly supplied with fish, taken from the adjacent moat, that formed a kind of weir, into which incredible quantities entered from the Mississippi. Among these was a kind called bagres, the head of which was one-third of its bulk, and about its fins and along its sides it had bones as sharp as needles. Some of those caught in the Mississippi weighed from a hundred to a hundred and fifty pounds weight.* There was another fish, also, of a curious shape, having a snout a cubit in length, and the upper lip like a spade or peel.† Neither of these two species had scales. The Indians likewise occasionally brought a fish, as large as a hog, which had several rows of teeth in each jaw.

While in the territory of Capaha, the Governor gathered intelligence from the Indians, that about forty leagues further on, among certain ranges of hills, there was much salt, and also much of a yellowish metal. As the army was suffering from want of salt, and still retained their eagerness for gold, De Soto despatched two trusty and intelligent men, accompanied by Indian guides, to visit this region. At the end of eleven days they returned, quite spent and half famished, having eaten nothing but green plums and green maize, which they found in some deserted wigwams; six of their native companions were laden with rock-salt in natural crystals, and one with copper. The country through which they had passed was sterile and thinly peopled, and the Indians informed the Governor, that still further north, the country was almost uninhabited, on account of extreme cold. The buffalo roamed there in such numbers that the inhabitants could not cultivate their fields; they subsisted, therefore, by the chase, and principally on the flesh of these wild animals.‡

Hearing so unfavourable an account of the country, and that there was no gold in that direction, De Soto returned

* The cat-fish.

† This spade or palat-fish is at present so rare as scarcely to be met with; but seems to have been peculiar to this region.—Vide Flint's Geography of the Mississippi, v. 1. p. 128 and 129. Nuttall's Arkansas, p. 254.

‡ Portuguese Relation, c. 24.

with his army to the village of Casquin, intending to march westward; for hitherto, ever since leaving Mauvila, he had kept northward, to avoid the sea.* After remaining five days in the village of Casquin, he proceeded along the bank of the river, through a fertile and populous country, until he came to the province of Quiguate, where he was well received. Keeping down the river, he arrived, on the fourth of August, at the chief village of the province, called by the same name. Here he took up his quarters, in the Cacique's house, where he remained six days.

One night during his halt here, the Governor was informed, that Juan Gaytan, the treasurer, whose turn it was to patrol at four in the morning, refused to perform his duty, urging as a plea the dignity of his official station. De Soto was angry at such a symptom of insubordination, the more so as this cavalier was one of those who had murmured at Mauvila, and had said he would return to Spain or Mexico, as soon as they reached the ships.

Quitting his bed, and proceeding to the terrace before the house of the Cacique, which overlooked the village, De Soto raised his voice until it resounded through the place. "What is this, soldiers and captains!" he cried. "Do the mutineers still live, who, when in Mauvila talked of returning to Spain or Mexico? and do they now, with the excuse of being officers of the royal revenue, refuse to patrol the four hours that fall to their share? Why do you desire to return to Spain?—have you left any hereditary estates that you wish to enjoy? Why do you desire to go to Mexico?—to prove the baseness and pusillanimity of your spirits?—that, having it in your power to become chieftains in a vast and noble country you have discovered, you prefer living dependants in a stranger's house, and of being guests at a stranger's table, than to maintain house and table of your own! What honour will this confer upon you? Shame, shame! blush for yourselves, and recollect that, whether officers of the royal treasury or not, you must all serve your sovereign! Presume not upon any rank you possess; for, be he who he may, I will strike off the head of that man who refuses to do his duty. And, at once to undeceive you, know that whilst I live, no one shall quit this country until we have conquered and settled it."

* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 4. c. 11.

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* Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 4. c. 11.

These words, uttered with great vehemence, showed the cause of that moody melancholy which the Governor had manifested *since he left Mauvila. This outbreak had a visible effect upon the soldiery. They saw that their General was not to be trifled with, and thenceforward obeyed his orders without murmuring.

CHAPTER XLVII.

1541. FROM Quiguate, De Soto shaped his course to the north-west, in search of a province called Coligoa, lying at the foot of mountains. He was guided by a single Indian, who led the army for several days through dreary forests and numerous marshes, until they came to the village of Coligoa, on the margin of a small river. The natives, not being apprised of the Spaniards coming, upon their approach, threw themselves into the river and fled. The troopers pursued them, and took a number of prisoners. In a few days the Cacique waited upon De Soto, bringing a present of mantles, deer-skins, and hides of the bison and buffalo, and informed him that about six leagues to the northward there was a thinly peopled country, where vast herds of these wild buffalos ranged;* but that to the southward there was a populous and plentiful province, called Cayas.

The Cacique of Coligoa having furnished the Spaniards with a guide, they resumed their march towards the south, and after a journey of five days, entered the province of Palisema. Its Cacique fled, but left his dwelling furnished and arranged in order for De Soto. The walls were hung with deer-skins, so admirably dyed and dressed, that they appeared to the eye like beautiful tapestry. The floor was likewise covered with skins similarly prepared.†

The adventurers made but a short halt in this province, as the supply of maize was scanty, and pushing rapidly onward, in four days crossed the frontiers of the province of Cayas, and encamped on the banks of a river near a village called Tanico.‡

* This province is supposed to have been situated towards the sources of the St. Francis, or the hills of White River.—Vide Nuttall's Arkansas, p. 256.

† Portuguese Relation, c. 25.

‡ Supposed to have belonged to the tribe of the Tunicas.—Vide Nuttall's Arkansas, p. 257.

The waters of this river, and of an adjacent lake, were impregnated with salt, so much so as to leave a deposit in the blue sand which bordered their shores. The Indians were accustomed to collect this sand in baskets, made wide above and narrow below, and suspended in the air on a pole. Water was then poured upon the sand, and draining through, fell into a vessel beneath, carrying with it the saline particles. The water being then evaporated by boiling, the crystallized salt remained at the bottom of the pot. This the Indians used as an article of traffic, exchanging it with their neighbours for skins and mantles.

The Spaniards, overjoyed at finding an article of which they were so much in need, remained here eight days making salt, and several who had suffered excessively for the want of it indulged so immoderately in the use of it, as to bring on maladies, and in some instances death.

Having laid in a large supply of salt, the army pursued their journey, and arriving at the province of Tula, marched four days through a wilderness, where they halted about mid-day in a beautiful plain, within half a league of the capital. In the afternoon, the Governor set out with a strong party of horse and foot, to reconnoitre the village. It was situated in a plain betwixt two streams. On their approach, the inhabitants seized their arms and sallied bravely forth, the women advancing to combat as fiercely as the men.

The Spaniards soon drove them back, and entered the village fighting. The savages fought from house to house, disdaining to ask for quarter, and struggling with fearless desperation. During the conflict, a soldier entered one of the houses and escaped to an upper chamber, used as a granary, where he found five women concealed. He made signs to them not to be alarmed, as he did not wish to injure them: his caution was unnecessary, for they flew on him like so many mastiffs upon a bull. In his struggle to shake them off, he thrust his leg through the slight partition of reeds, remaining seated on the floor at the mercy of those furies, who, with biting and blows, were in a fair way of killing him. Notwithstanding the strait he was in, the sturdy soldier was ashamed to call for succour, because his antagonists were women.

At this moment another soldier happened to enter below, and seeing a naked leg through the ceiling, at first took it for

the limb of an Indian, raised his sword and was about to strike, but observing it more narrowly, and hearing the clamour over head, he suspected the truth of the matter, and calling two of his companions, they ascended to the rescue of their comrade. So fierce, however, was the fury of the women, that not one of them would quit her hold upon the soldier, until they were all slain.

At a late hour the Governor drew off his men from the village, and returned to the camp; vexed at having been drawn into so unprofitable a battle, in which many of his followers were severely wounded.*

On the following day, the army entered the village and found it abandoned. During the afternoon, bands of horse scoured the country in every direction. They met several of the natives, but it was impossible to bring them in alive, or obtain any information from them. They threw themselves upon the ground, crying, "Kill me or leave me!" Nor could the death of some conquer the obstinacy of the rest.

In this village the Spaniards found the flesh of buffaloes and numerous skins of the same animal; some in a raw state, others dressed for robes and blankets. They sought in vain, however, to meet with these animals alive, but still learnt that they existed in great herds to the northward. The inhabitants of the province of Tula differed from all the Indians they had yet seen. They had found the natives generally handsome and well formed; but these, both men and women, were extremely ill-favoured. Their heads were very large, and narrow at the top—a shape produced by being compressed by bandages from their birth to the age of nine or ten years. Their faces, particularly their lips, inside and out, were frightfully tatooed; and their dispositions corresponded with their hideous aspects.

On the fourth night after the Spaniards had gained possession of the village, the savages came in great numbers, and so silently, that before the sentinels perceived them, they burst upon the encampment in three different parts. Loud were the shouts, and great was the confusion; for, in the darkness, it was impossible to distinguish friends from foes. The Spaniards shouted the names of the Virgin and Santiago, to prevent their wounding one another. The savages, likewise shouted the name of Tula. Many of them, instead

* Portuguese Relation, c. 25, 26. Garcilaso de la Vega, L. 4. c. 12.

of bows and arrows had staves like pikes, two or three yards long, which were new to the soldiers, and with which the Indians inflicted many severe wounds.

They fought stubbornly for more than an hour, and did not retreat to the woods until day began to dawn. The Spaniards did not pursue them, but returned to the village to take care of the wounded, of which there were many, although four only were killed.

After the battle, as usual, several of the Spaniards were scattered about the field examining the dead. Three foot soldiers and two on horseback were thus employed, when one of the former saw an Indian raise his head from among the bushes and immediately conceal it again. He gave the cry of Indians! Indians! The two men on horseback, thinking some of the enemy were coming in large detachments, galloped off in different directions to meet them. In the meantime, the foot soldier who had discovered the Indian among the bushes ran up to kill him.

The savage, seeing he could not escape, stepped forward manfully to the encounter, armed with a Spanish battle-axe, which he had obtained that morning in the village. Taking it in both hands, he struck the shield of the soldier, severed it in two, and badly wounded his arm. The pain of the wound was so great and the blow so violent, that the Spaniard had not strength to attack his foe. The Indian then rushed upon the other soldier who was coming up, struck his shield in the same manner, broke it, wounded him likewise in the arm and disabled him. One of the horsemen, seeing his companions so roughly handled, charged the savage, who took shelter beneath an oak tree. The Spaniard not being able to ride under the tree, drew near and made several thrusts at the enemy, but could not reach him. The Indian rushed out, brandished the battle-axe as before, struck the horse across the shoulder, laying it open from the withers to the knee, and thus deprived the animal of the power of moving.

At this moment, Gonzalo Silvestre, who was on foot, came up. He had been in no haste, deeming two foot soldiers and three horsemen sufficient to manage one Indian. The latter, elated by his success, advanced to receive the Spaniard with great boldness. Grasping the battle-axe, he gave a blow similar to the two first; but Silvestre was more guarded than

his companions. The weapon glanced from his shield and stuck in the ground. Silvestre having the enemy at an advantage, gave him a diagonal blow with his sword, which laid open his face and breast, and, entering his arm, nearly severed the wrist. The infidel, seizing the axe between the stump and his other hand, with a desperate leap, made an attempt to wound Silvestre in the face; but again warding off the blow with his shield, he gave the savage a sweeping cut across the waist, that passed through his naked body, and he fell dead, cut completely asunder.*

CHAPTER XLVIII.

1541. THE Spaniards continued in the village of Tula twenty days, curing the wounded. During this time they made many incursions in different parts of the province, which was very populous; but, although they captured many inhabitants, it was impossible either by presents or menaces, to acquire their friendship, or reduce them to obedience. So extreme was the ferocity of this tribe, that they were the dread of all their neighbours, who used the name of Tula as an object of nursery terror to their unruly children.

The army pursued their march in quest of the province called Utiangue, or Autiamque; about ten days' journey, or eighty leagues from Tula. In that neighbourhood, the Indians said, there was a large lake, which the Spaniards hoped might prove an arm of the sea. Five days of their journey was over a rough, mountainous country, thickly wooded, where they found a village called Quipana;† but could take none of the inhabitants, the forests impeding the speed of their horses.

After a further march of a few days they entered the province of Utiangue. It was very fertile, containing a scattered but warlike population. Though incessantly harassed by ambuscades and skirmishes, the Spaniards proceeded until they reached the village of Utiangue, from which the province took its name. It contained many well-built houses,

* The Inca says, that the blow was so powerful, and the sword so keen, that the Indian remained for a few seconds standing on his feet, and saying to the Spaniard, "Peace be with you," (*quedate en pas*,) fell dead in two halves! The feat, as described in the text, is sufficiently strong for belief.

† Supposed to be in the country of the Kappaws, or Quapaws.

and was situated in a fine plain, watered by the same river which passed through the province of Cayas,* and was bordered by meadows that afforded excellent pasturage for horses. The town was abandoned by its inhabitants, except a few lingerers whom the Spaniards made prisoners. The houses were well stocked with maize, small beans, nuts, and plums.

As the season was far advanced, De Soto determined to winter here. Having encamped in the centre of the village, but apart from the houses, lest the Indians should set fire to them in the night, he commenced fortifying the place. The ground to be enclosed was measured out, and a portion assigned to each soldier, according to the number of slaves he owned. Thus every one had his task, and worked with emulation, the Indians bringing wood. In three days the village was surrounded by strong palisades, driven deep into the ground, and fastened by cross pieces.

In addition to the ample supply of provisions found in this village, the Spaniards foraged the surrounding country, and brought in abundance of maize, dried fruits, and various kinds of grain. They were extremely successful also in the chase; killing great numbers of deer. The province, moreover, abounded to an unusual degree with rabbits, of which they found two species; one of the usual size, the other as large and strong as a hare and much fatter. These the Indians were accustomed to snare with running nooses.

The Cacique of the province sent messengers from time to time with presents and promises of friendly service, but never made his appearance. These messengers, also, always arrived at night, and, after delivering their message loitered about the camp, noticing the men, horses, and weapons; showing evidently that they only came as spies. The Governor, therefore, gave orders that no Indian should be admitted after sun-set; and one, persisting to enter, was killed by a sentinel; which put an end to all similar embassies.

The Spaniards were often waylaid and assaulted, when out on foraging and hunting parties, but generally managed to defeat their assailants.

During the winter, there were great falls of snow for upwards of a month, and at length firewood began to fail. Upon this, De Soto turned out with all the horse, and by

* Supposed to be the Arkansas.

riding backward and forward, made a practicable road from the camp to a forest, about two bow-shots distant, which enabled the men to go thither and cut fuel.*

Upon the whole, though the season was severe, yet, having good quarters, and fuel and food in plenty, the adventurers passed the pleasantest winter they had experienced in the course of their arduous journey, enjoyed their present ease and abundance with the greatest zest, which was sharpened by the frightful hardships and disasters they had encountered.

During their residence in this village, Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, died. His death was a severe loss to the expedition; as he had been the main organ of communication between the Spaniards and natives. It is true, that even with his assistance these communications were extremely imperfect, and subject to many misinterpretations, for he was acquainted merely with the language of the Indians in the neighbourhood of Espiritu Santo; whereas, in the march of the army, they were continually passing through new provinces, which had each its peculiar dialect. It was necessary, therefore, to have an Indian interpreter from almost every tribe, which rendered their mode of communication often difficult in the extreme.

In treating with a Cacique, the word given by the Governor to Juan Ortiz, was passed from mouth to mouth, of perhaps eight or ten Indians of different tribes, before it reached the person to be addressed; and the reply was transmitted in the same tedious method to the Governor. Information, also, concerning any new region was collected in the same manner, subject to perversions and misunderstandings in the course of its transmission.

Hence arose continual errors among the Spaniards, as to the country and its inhabitants, which often bewildered them in their wanderings, and doubtless led to many sanguinary affrays with the natives which a proper understanding might have prevented.

The death of Juan Ortiz increased these disadvantages tenfold. Henceforth, they had no other interpreter but the young Indian brought from Cofachiqui. He, however, had acquired but an imperfect knowledge of the Spanish language, and was deficient in the sagacity, general information, and varied experience, which had distinguished Juan Ortiz.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 27.

CHAPTER XLIX.

1542. THE feelings and views of Hernando De Soto had recently undergone a change. The anger which had induced him so suddenly to alter his plans at Mauvila, and turn his back upon the sea, had gradually subsided. His hopes of finding a golden region were fast fading away. He had lost nearly half his troops by fighting, sickness, and hardships of various kinds. The greater part of his horses, too, were slain or had perished. Of the remainder, many were lame, and all had been without shoes above a year. He was daily more and more sensible, also, of the loss he had sustained in the death of Juan Ortiz. The young Indian of Cofachiqui, who succeeded him as interpreter, made continual blunders as to the nature of the country, the rivers, routes, and distances, and there was danger through his misinformation, that the army might be led into difficulties, and become perplexed or lost in the vast and trackless wildernesses they had to traverse.

De Soto bitterly repented having abandoned his original plan of joining his ships and establishing a colony on the shores of Achusi. Being now too far from the sea to attempt reaching it by a direct march, he resolved to give over his wandering in the interior, make the best of his way to the Mississippi, and choose some suitable village on its banks for a fortified post, where he might securely establish himself. He, moreover, determined to build two brigantines, in which some of his most confidential followers might descend the river, carry tidings of his safety to his wife and friends in Cuba, and procure reinforcements of men and horses, together with a supply of flocks, herds, seeds, and everything else necessary to colonize and secure the possession of the vast and fertile country he had overrun.*

As soon as the spring was sufficiently advanced, therefore, De Soto broke up his winter cantonment at Utiangue, and set out in a direction for the Rio Grande, or Mississippi. He had received intelligence of a village called Anilco, situated on the banks of a great river which emptied into the Mississippi; and towards that village he shaped his course.

After quitting Utiangue, he spent ten days at a village

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 28. Garcilaso de la Vega, lib. 5. l. c. 3.

near the same river which passed by Cayas and Utiangué,* in the province of Ayas. During his stay there, a boat was constructed, in which the army crossed the stream, but were detained four days on its banks by snow and bad weather. They then journeyed through a low country, cut up by ravines, and perplexed with swamps. It was toilsome marching for the infantry. The troopers, were always up to the stirrup, sometimes to the knees in water, and now and then obliged to swim their horses.

At a town called Tultelpina, they were checked in their march by a lake, which emptied itself into a river. The waters were high and turbulent. De Soto ordered one of his captains to embark in a canoe with five men and cross the lake. The impetuous current overturned the frail bark: some of the men clung to it, others to the trees that were standing in the water; but one, Francisco Bastian, a Spaniard of rank, was unfortunately drowned. De Soto then sought in vain to discover a route along the borders of the lake. At length, at the suggestion of two Indians of Tultelpina, he caused light rafts to be made of reeds and the wood-work of houses, and in this way transported his army across.†

Urging their way forward, the Spaniards arrived at the province of Anilco, and penetrated about thirty leagues, passing several villages, until they reached the principal one which gave its name to the district. It was situated in an open country, on the banks of a copious stream, and contained about four hundred spacious houses, built round a square. The residence of the Cacique, as usual, was posted on a high artificial mound. The country was so well peopled that there were several other villages in sight, and such quantities of maize, fruits, and pulse of various kinds, that the Spaniards pronounced it the most fertile and populous country they had met with except Coza and Apalachee.

On the strangers' approach the inhabitants made some show of resistance and skirmished slightly; but this was only to cover the retreat of their wives and children across the river on rafts and in canoes. Some few were taken before they could embark. Many more, who had not been able to escape, were found in the village.

Soon after the Governor had taken up his quarters in the capital, an Indian of distinction, attended by a few followers,

* Supposed to be the Arkansas. † Portuguese Relation, c. 23.

came to him in the name of the Cacique, with presents of a mantle of martin skins and a string of large pearls. De Soto gave the chief of the embassy a collar of mother-of-pearl and some other trinkets, with which he went away apparently well satisfied. The negotiation which opened thus favourably ended in nothing. The ambassadors proved to be mere spies sent to observe the strangers' force. The Cacique could not be induced to enter into friendly intercourse, treating all messengers sent to him with great haughtiness and exhibiting signs of determined hostility.

The river that ran by the village of Anilco was the same that passed by Cayas and Utiangue; and De Soto was informed that at no great distance it emptied itself into the Mississippi.* He was told, also, that near the confluence of the two streams, on the banks of the Mississippi, was situated a large village, called Guachoya, the capital of a populous and fruitful province of the same name, the Cacique of which was continually at war with the Chief of Anilco.

De Soto determined to proceed to this province, in hopes that the sea might lie at no great distance from it. At any rate Guachoya might prove an advantageous site for building his brigantines and encamping his troops. As soon, therefore, as canoes could be procured and rafts constructed to cross the river, the army resumed its march over a hilly, uninhabited country, and in four days arrived at the village of Guachoya. It contained three hundred houses and was situated about a bow-shot from the Mississippi on two contiguous hills, between which was a small plain that served as a public square. The whole was fortified by palisades. The inhabitants had fled across the Mississippi in their canoes, taking with them most of their effects; but Juan de Añasco foraged the neighbourhood and obtained a great supply of maize, beans, dried fruits, and cakes made of pressed plums, or persimmons.

CHAPTER L.

1542. De Soto took up his quarters in the Cacique's house, which was large and commodious. Four days were passed in negotiations between him and the Cacique who was ex-

* The river is supposed to be the Arkansas.

tremely distrustful of the Spaniards. At length the Chieftain's apprehensions were removed, and on the fifth day he visited the army. He came with a retinue of a hundred warriors, decked in savage finery, and bringing presents of mantles, deer-skins, fish, and dogs..

The Governor received Guachoya very courteously at the door of his mansion, and conducted him into the great saloon, or hall of the building. The Cacique's attendants ranged themselves round the apartment among the Spaniards, while their Chief and the Governor held a long conversation through the medium of interpreters, concerning the territories of the former.

In the midst of their conversation the Cacique happened to sneeze. Upon this, all his attendants bowed their heads, opened and closed their arms, and making other signs of veneration, saluted their prince with various phrases of the same purport—May the sun guard you—may the sun be with you—may the sun shine upon you—defend you—prosper you, and the like; each uttered the phrase that came first to his mind, and for a short time there was a universal murmuring of these compliments.*

Guachoya ate at the Governor's table. His followers remained in attendance and would not go to their own repast, although repeatedly invited, until their chief had finished; they then dined in the soldiers' quarters, where a general repast was provided. The Cacique lodged in a part of his own dwelling with a few of his personal attendants; but at sunset his warriors crossed to the opposite side of the river and returned in the morning. This they continued to do while the Spaniards remained in the village. One of De Soto's first questions to the Cacique was, whether he knew any thing of the sea. Guachoya, however, professed utter ignorance of any such vast body of water; his knowledge of the country down to the river did not extend beyond a great province called Quigualtanqui; the Cacique of which, he said, was the greatest chieftain in all these parts.

The Governor suspecting his ignorance to be feigned, despatched Juan de Añasco with eight troopers to explore the course of the river and ascertain whether the sea was near. De Añasco returned after eight days' absence, during which he had not been able to advance above fifteen leagues

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. Lib. 5. c. 5.

on account of the great windings of the river and the swamps by which it was bordered.*

This information determined De Soto to build two brigantines at Guachoya, and to establish his projected colony between that place and Anilco, in a fertile country, where supplies were to be easily had. In this settlement it was his intention to remain until the brigantines should return with reinforcements and supplies. To enable him to pursue these plans without molestation, it was important for him to conciliate the friendship of the Cacique Anilco, whose territories lay adjacent, and who would be enabled to render him much assistance as an ally, but great annoyance as an enemy.

Guachoya, apprehending the Governor's inclinations, advised him to return to the province of Anilco, offering to accompany and aid him with his people. As he would have to re-cross the river that ran by the village of Anilco, and united with the Mississippi, the Cacique offered to supply eighty large and numerous small canoes. These would have to proceed seven leagues along the Mississippi, to the mouth of the river up which they would ascend to the village; the whole distance making a navigation of twenty leagues. Meanwhile the Governor and Cacique, with their forces, would proceed by land, so as to arrive opposite the village at the same time with the canoes.

Arrangements were accordingly made. As soon as the canoes were ready, four thousand Indian warriors, besides the rowers, embarked in them; with these, the Governor sent Captain Juan de Guzman and his company, to command the canoes and keep the Indians in order. Three days were allowed for the voyage.

At the moment they pushed off from the shore, the Governor set out by land with his troops, accompanied by Guachoya at the head of two thousand warriors, besides those who carried provisions.

The two expeditions arrived opposite the village at the time appointed. The Cacique of Anilco was absent, but the inhabitants making a stand at the pass of the river Nuño, Tobar fell furiously upon them with a party of horse. Eager for the fight, the Spaniards charged so heedlessly, that each trooper found himself surrounded by a band of Indians. The latter, however, were so panic stricken that they turned

* Portuguese Relation, c. 29.

their backs and fled in wild disorder to the forests, amid the shouts of the pursuers and the shrieks of the women and children.* Guachoya now gave full vent to his thirst for vengeance. In his alliance with the Spaniards, and in advising the General to revisit this province, he had been actuated, like Casquin, solely by a secret desire to revenge himself upon an ancient enemy. The province of Anilco and that of Guachoya were in continual hostility; but the former had, for some time, obtained the advantage, and brought off many trophies gained in ambuscades, surprises, and midnight forays; the mode in which the savages carried on their warfare.

On entering the conquered village, the first thought of the warriors of Guachoya was to attack the sepulchres of the Caciques. They removed the heads of their own countrymen stuck round the gate, replacing them with those of their enemies. They stripped the sepulchres of all the trophies, scalps, and banners taken from their nation in battle; carried off the relics and ornaments of the dead, threw down their coffins, and scattered about their bones, as had been done on a former occasion. Then scouring through the village, they massacred all they met, being chiefly old men, women, and children, upon whom they inflicted the most horrible barbarities.

In all this they acted with such fury and haste, that the mischief was effected almost before De Soto was aware of it. He put an end to the carnage as soon as possible, reprimanded the Cacique severely, forbade any one to set fire to a house, or injure an Indian, under pain of death, and quitted the village as speedily as possible; taking care that his Indian allies should first pass the river, and not remain behind to do mischief.

His precautions were all ineffectual. He had scarcely disembarked and marched a league forward, when, on looking back, he saw a great smoke arising from Anilco, and found that several of the houses were already in flames. In fact the warriors of Guachoya, being deterred from open hostility, had secretly placed coals among the straw roofs of the houses. These being parched with the summer heat, easily took fire, and burst into a blaze.

The Governor would have returned to extinguish the flames,

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 29.

but at this instant he saw many Indians of the neighbourhood running towards the village; therefore, leaving it to their care, he continued his march, exceedingly vexed at having his friendly intentions towards Anilco thus defeated, but concealing his anger, lest he should likewise make an enemy of his crafty ally.*

CHAPTER LI.

ON taking up his quarters again in the village of Guachoya, De Soto set to work with his usual energy and perseverance to construct the two brigantines. He ordered timber to be cut; collected all the ropes and cordage he could find in the neighbourhood, to serve for rigging; employed Indians to gather resin and gums from pines and other trees, and caused all the spikes and nails saved from the old piraguas to be put in order, and an additional quantity made. He had already, in his own mind, selected from among his faithful and trusty followers the officers and men who were to embark in the expedition. With the remainder of his army, amounting to about five hundred men and fifty horses, he intended to await their return. While, therefore, he urged the building of the brigantines, he made diligent search for some fruitful region, where he could be sure of subsistence for his army, during the absence of his envoys.

Having heard much concerning the fertility of the great province already mentioned, named Quigualtanqui, which lay on the opposite side of the Mississippi, De Soto sent a party of horse and foot to explore it. The river was here about a mile in width, seventeen fathoms deep, and very rapid, having both shores thickly inhabited.† Collecting all the canoes of the village, and fastening the larger, two and two, together, he caused the cavalry to be passed over in them, while the infantry crossed in the smaller. They scoured the province of Quigualtanqui, and visited many hamlets, especially the principal one, containing five hundred houses, and immediately opposite to Guachoya. The habitations, however, were everywhere deserted; the inhabitants having fled or hid themselves. The scouting party, therefore, re-

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. Lib. 5. c. 6. Herrera, Decad. 7. Lib. 7. c. 3.

† Portuguese Narrative, c. 29.

turned, without having effected any thing, but giving glowing accounts of the evident fertility and populousness of the province.

These favourable reports determined De Soto to cross the river with his troops, as soon as the brigantines should be despatched, establish his head-quarters in the chief town of Quigualtanqui, and there spend the summer and winter that must intervene before the return of his envoys.

To his infinite vexation, however, a violent hostility was manifested on the part of Quigualtanqui. That Chieftain, being of a haughty character and possessing great power, was extremely tenacious of his territorial sway. He was incensed at the inroad of the Spanish scouts, and sent messengers to De Soto, swearing by the sun and moon, to wage a war of extermination against him and his people, should any of them dare again to enter his dominions.*

At an earlier period, a message of this kind would have been answered by De Soto by an inroad into the Cacique's dominions; but his spirits were gradually failing. He had brooded over his past error, in abandoning the sea-coast until he was sick at heart; and as he saw the perils of his situation every moment increasing, new and powerful enemies continually springing up around him, while his scanty force was daily diminishing, he became anxious for the preservation of the remainder of his followers, and determined to avoid all further warfare. He sent a messenger, therefore, to the Cacique, soliciting his friendship. Availing himself of an Indian superstition with respect to himself, he informed the haughty Chieftain that he was the offspring of the sun; the luminary which the natives professed to worship;—that as such, he had received the homage of the Caciques of all the provinces through which he had passed;—and, inviting Quigualtanqui to come and pay him similar reverence, he promised to take him into especial favour and to reward him with inestimable gifts.

Meanwhile the melancholy which had long preyed upon De Soto's spirits; his incessant anxiety of mind and fatigue of body, added perhaps to the influence of climate, brought on a slow fever, which at length confined him to his bed.

In the midst of his illness, he received a reply from Quigualtanqui, by his own messenger. The stern warrior ob-

* Alonzo de Carmona.—Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. L. 5. c. 6.

served, that if what De Soto pretended were true, and he was really the offspring of the sun, he might prove the fact, by drying up the great river; in which case he should be ready to come over and pay him homage. If he could not do so, he must know that Quigualtanqui, being the greatest Chieftain in the land, visited nobody; but received visits and tribute from all. If, therefore, De Soto wished to see him, he must cross the river to his territory. If he came as a friend, he should be received as such; if as an enemy, he would find Quigualtanqui and his men ready for battle, and resolved never to yield an inch of ground.*

This taunting reply irritated the harassed spirit of De Soto and augmented his malady. He was still more irritated by the information that the Cacique was endeavouring to form a league of all the neighbouring Chieftains against him; and he dreaded that some new disasters might occur to delay if not to defeat his plans. From his sick bed, however, he maintained his usual vigilance for the safety of his army. The sentinels were doubled, and a rigid watch maintained. Each night the cavalry mounted guard in the village suburbs, their horses caprisoned, ready for action; two troopers were constantly upon the patrol, alternately visiting the outposts, and detachments of cross-bowmen kept watch upon the river in canoes.†

The schemes, labours, and anxieties of De Soto, however, were rapidly drawing to a close; day by day his malady increased, and his fever rose to such a height, that he felt convinced his last hour was at hand. He prepared for death with the steadfastness of a soldier, and the piety of a devout Catholic.

He made his will almost in cypher, for want of sufficient paper; then calling together the officers and soldiers of note, he nominated, as his successor to the titles and commands of Governor and Captain-General of the kingdom and provinces of Florida, Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado; the same whom, in the province of Chicaza, he had deposed from the office of Master of the Camp; and he charged the troops on the part of the Emperor, and in consideration of the virtues of Luis de Moscoso, to obey him in the above capacities, until further orders should be received from government. To all this he required them to make oath with due form and solemnity.

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 29.

† Portuguese Relation, c. 29.

When this was done, the dying Chieftain called to him, by twos and threes, the most noble of his army, and after them, ordering that the soldiers should enter by twenties and thirties, he took of all his last farewell, with great tenderness on his own part, and with many tears on theirs. He charged them to convert the natives to the Catholic faith, and augment the power of the Spanish crown, being himself cut off by death from the accomplishment of these great aims. He thanked them for the affection and fidelity which they had evinced, in fearlessly following his fortunes through such great trials, and expressed his deep regret that it was not in his power to show his gratitude, by bestowing upon them such rewards as they merited. He begged forgiveness of all whom he had offended, and finally, entreated them in the most affectionate manner to be peaceful and kind to one another. His fever raged violently, and continued to increase until the seventh day, when, having confessed his sins with much humility and contrition, he expired.*

Thus died Hernando de Soto; one of the boldest of the many brave leaders, who figured in the first discoveries, and distinguished themselves in the wild warfare of the Western World. How proud and promising had been the commencement of his career! how humble and hapless its close! Cut off in the vigour of his days, for he was but forty-two years old when he expired—he perished in a strange and savage land, amid the din and tumult of a camp, and with merely a few rough soldiers to attend him; for nearly all were engaged in making preparations for their escape from the perils by which they were beset.

Hernando de Soto was well calculated to command the independent and chivalric spirits of which his army was composed; for while his ideas of military discipline were very strict, and he severely punished every breach of military duty, he easily pardoned all other offences. No one was

* “He died,” says the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, in his Chronicle, “like a Catholic Christian, imploring mercy of the most Holy Trinity; relying on the protection of the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, the intercession of the Virgin, and of all the Celestial Court, and in the faith of the Roman church.”

“With these words, repeating them many times, this magnanimous and never-conquered cavalier, worthy of great dignities and titles, resigned his soul to God, deserving a better historian than an unlettered Indian.”

more prompt to notice and reward merit of whatever kind. He is said to have been courteous and engaging in his manners, patient and persevering under difficulties, encouraging his followers by his quiet endurance of suffering. In his own person, he was valiant in the extreme, and of such vigour of arm, that wherever he entered into battle, he is said to have hewn himself a path through the thickest of the enemy. Some of his biographers have accused him of cruelty towards the Indians; but according to the Inca's account, we find him, in general, humane and merciful; striving to conciliate the natives by presents and kind messages, and only resorting to violent measures where the safety of himself and followers were at stake. A striking contrast to his humanity in this respect, will be presented in the conduct of his successor, Luis de Moscoso.

CHAPTER LII.

1542. THE death of the Governor left his followers overwhelmed with grief. They felt as if they had been made orphans by his loss, as they had looked up to him as a father: and their sorrow was the greater, because they could not perform those solemn obsequies due to the remains of a commander so much beloved and honoured.

They feared to bury him publicly, and with becoming ceremonies, lest the Indians should discover the place of his interment, and outrage his remains, as they had done those of other Spaniards; tearing them from their graves, dismembering them, and hanging them piecemeal from the trees. If they had shown such indignities to the bodies of common soldiers, how much greater would they be likely to commit upon the body of their general? Besides, De Soto had impressed them with a very exalted opinion of his prudence and valour; and the Spaniards, therefore, dreaded lest, when the Indians discovered that the Spanish leader was dead, they should be induced to revolt, and fall upon their weakened and diminished army.*

For these reasons they buried him at midnight, sentinels being posted to keep the natives at a distance, that the sad ceremony might be safe from the observation of their spies.

* Portuguese Relation c. 30.

The place chosen for his sepulchre was one of many broad and deep pits, in a plain near the village, whence the Indians had taken earth for their dwellings. Here he was interred in silence and in secret, amid the tears of priests and cavaliers, who were present at his mournful obsequies. The better to deceive the natives, and prevent their suspecting the place of his interment, they gave out, on the following day, that the Governor was recovering from his malady, and, mounting their horses, assumed an appearance of rejoicing. In order that all traces of the grave might be lost, they caused much water to be sprinkled over it, and upon the surrounding plain, to prevent the dust from being raised by their horses. They then scoured the plain, galloping about the pits, and over the very grave of their commander; but it was difficult, under this cover of pretended gaiety, to conceal the real sadness of their hearts.

With all these precautions, they soon found out that the Indians suspected, not only the Governor's death, but the place where he lay buried; for in passing by the pits, they would stop, look round attentively on all sides, talk to one another, and make signs with their chins, directing, at the same time, their eyes toward the spot where the body was interred.

The Spaniards perceiving this, and feeling assured that the savages would search the whole plain until they found the body, determined to disinter it, and place it where it would be secure from violation. No place appeared better suited to their purpose than the Mississippi; but they first wished to ascertain whether there was sufficient depth of water effectually to hide the body.

Accordingly, Juan de Añasco, and other officers, taking a mariner with them, embarked one evening in a canoe, under pretence of fishing; and sounding the river where it was a quarter of a league wide, in mid-channel they found a depth of nineteen fathoms. Here, therefore, they determined to deposit the corpse.

As there was no stone in the neighbourhood sufficiently heavy to sink it, they cut down an evergreen oak, and made an excavation in one side, the size of a man. On the following night they disinterred the body with all possible silence, and placing it in the trunk of the oak nailed planks over the aperture. This rustic coffin was then conveyed to the centre of the river,

where, in the presence of several priests and cavaliers, it was committed to the stream. They beheld it sink to the bottom, shedding many tears over it, and commending anew to heaven* the soul of the good cavalier.

The Indians, soon perceiving that the Governor was not with the army, nor buried, as they had supposed, demanded of the Spaniards what had become of him. The general reply prepared for the occasion was, that God had sent for him, to communicate to him great things, which he would be commissioned to perform so soon as he should return to earth. With this answer they were apparently contented.†

The Cacique, however, who believed that he was dead, sent two handsome young Indians to Moscoso, with a message, stating that it was the custom of his country, when any great prince died, to put a certain number of persons to death, in order that they might attend, and serve him on his journey to the land of spirits; and for that purpose, these young men presented themselves. Luis de Moscoso replied, that the Governor was not dead, but gone to heaven, and had chosen some of his Christian followers to accompany him there; he therefore prayed the Cacique to receive again the two youths, and renounce for the future so barbarous a custom. He accordingly set the Indians at liberty on the spot, and ordered them to return home; but one of them refused to go, saying that he would not serve a master who had condemned him to death without a cause, but would ever follow one who had saved his life.‡

De Soto's effects, consisting in all of two slaves, three horses, and seven hundred swine, were disposed of by public sale. The slaves and horses were sold for three thousand crowns each; the money to be paid by the purchaser on the first discovery of any gold or silver mines, or as soon as he should be proprietor of a plantation in Florida. Should neither of these events come to pass, the buyer pledged himself to pay the money within a year. The swine were sold in like manner, at two hundred crowns a-piece. Henceforth, the greater number of the soldiers possessed this desirable article of food, which they ate on all days save Fridays,

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Part 1. Lib. 4. c. 8.

† Alonzo de Carmona and Juan Coles. Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 1. Lib. 4. c. 8.

‡ Portuguese Relation, c. 30.

Saturdays, and the eves of festivals; these they rigidly observed according to the customs of the Roman Catholic church.*

This abstinence they were not able to practise before, as they were frequently without meat for two or three months together, and when they found any, were glad to devour it, without regard to days.

CHAPTER LIII.

1542. AFTER their first grief for the loss of their illustrious commander, many in the army began to doubt whether it was really a calamity. Some even thought it matter of rejoicing; for numbers of officers and soldiers had long been disheartened by sufferings and their disappointment of expectations of golden spoils. Nothing but their respect for De Soto and the sway he maintained over them had prevented their abandoning so disastrous a country. They were now in hopes that the new Governor, who was devoutly inclined, would choose rather to seek rest and repose in some Christian land than follow out the schemes of De Soto.

Luis de Moscoso immediately called a council to deliberate upon what was to be done; and it was determined by common consent of the leading men to quit the country as soon as possible. Moscoso requested each officer to deliver in his written opinion whether they should follow the course of the river or cross the country to the westward.

Juan de Añasco, the contador, was for carrying out the views and plans of De Soto. He not only opposed the idea of suddenly abandoning the country, but offered to guide the army to the frontiers of Mexico; for he piqued himself upon his knowledge of geography, and presumed by its aid to deliver his comrades out of all their difficulties.

The proposition of Añasco derived support from the recollection of certain rumours which the Indians had brought some months before, that not far to the west there were other Spaniards then pursuing a course of conquest. These rumours were now received as true; it was therefore concluded that those Spaniards must have sallied forth from Mexico to conquer new kingdoms; and as according to the

* Portuguese Narrative, c. 13.

account received they could not be far distant, it was determined to march with all speed in that direction, and join them in their career of successful subjugation.

On the fourth or fifth of June, the army set out on its march, under the command of its new Governor and Captain-General, Luis de Moscoso; directing its course westward, and determined to turn neither to the right nor to the left. By keeping in that direction it was concluded they must arrive at the confines of Mexico: not perceiving they were in a much higher latitude than that of New Spain.

A young Indian, sixteen or seventeen years of age, finely formed, and having a handsome countenance, followed the Spaniards of his own accord when they left this province. From suspicion that he might prove to be a spy, the circumstance was mentioned to Luis de Moscoso, who, ordering the stripling to be brought before him, demanded through his interpreters, the cause of his leaving his parents and friends to follow a people whom he did not know? "Señor," replied he, "I am poor and an orphan; my parents died when I was very young and left me destitute. An Indian chief of my native village, a near relative of the Cacique, took compassion on me, led me to his home, and brought me up among his children. When you left the village he was grievously sick and his life despaired of. His wife and children determined, in case he died, that I should be buried with him alive; because, they said, that my master having cherished and tenderly loved me, I must go with him to serve him in the world whither he had gone. Now, although I am deeply grateful to him for having sheltered and fostered me and love his memory, yet I have no desire to share his grave. Seeing no other way to escape this death but by seeking protection from the strangers, I preferred becoming their slave to being buried alive. This, alone, is the cause of my coming." *

The Spaniards perceived by this and the instance already mentioned, that the superstitious custom of burying wives and servants alive with the dead bodies of their masters and husbands was observed in this region, as in all others yet discovered in the new world.

After quitting Guachoya, the Spaniards passed through the province of Catalte; then crossed a desert country to

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 5. Part 2. c. 2.

another province called Chaguata, where they arrived on the twentieth of June. The Cacique had already visited their camp during the life of De Soto when quartered at Utiangue, and now resumed a friendly intercourse. Near the capital of this province they found the natives busily employed in making salt at a saline spring. Here the troops remained six days supplying themselves with this necessary article. They then continued their march westward in quest of the province of Aguacay, which they were told lay three days' journey onward.

CHAPTER LIV.

1542. ON the second day of their march, the Governor was informed that one of their number, named Diego de Guzman, was missing. He immediately ordered a halt, and entered into a diligent investigation of the matter; apprehending that Guzman might have been detained or murdered by the Indians.

Diego de Guzman was one of the many young Spanish cavaliers who had joined this expedition with romantic notions of conquest, of glory, and of gain. He was of a good family, and rich, and enlisted in the enterprise with costly raiment, splendid armour and weapons, and three fine horses. Unluckily, he was passionately fond of play, and had but too frequent opportunities of indulging in it; for the Spaniards, while they were encamped, passed much of their leisure in gambling, as is usual with soldiers, and especially with such young adventurers as formed a great part of this band of discoverers.

In the conflagration of Mauvila, all their cards being burnt, they made others of parchment, painted with admirable skill; and, as they could not obtain a sufficient supply for the number of gamblers, the packs were lent from one to the other for limited periods. With these they gambled under trees, in their wigwams, or on the river banks.

Diego de Guzman was one of the keenest; but a run of ill luck had gradually stripped him of all he had brought to the army, or captured on the march; and but a few days previously he had lost his clothes, his arms, a horse, and a female captive, recently taken in a foray. De Guzman had honour-

ably paid all his losses, but when he came to part with his captive, there was a struggle between pride and affection. The girl was but eighteen years of age, extremely beautiful, and having conceived a passion for her, he put off the winner, with an assurance that he would give her up to him in the course of four or five days. De Guzman, who had been seen in the camp the day before the march, was now missing, and the girl had disappeared likewise. On hearing all these circumstances, the Governor concluded that, ashamed of having lost his arms and steed, and unwilling to give up his Indian beauty, he had escaped with her to her tribe. He was confirmed in this suspicion on hearing that the female was daughter of the Cacique of Chaguata.

The General now summoned before him four Chiefs of the province, who were among his escort, and ordered them to cause the Spaniard, who had deserted, to be sought out and brought to the camp; telling them, that unless he was produced, he should conclude that the soldier had been treacherously murdered, and should consequently revenge his death.

The Chiefs, terrified for their own safety, sent messengers with speed. These returned declaring that De Guzman was at the dwelling of their Cacique, who was feasting him and treating him with all possible kindness and distinction, and that he could not be prevailed upon to return to the army.

Moscoso refused all credit to this story, and persisted in his surmises that De Guzman had been murdered. Upon this, one of the Chiefs turned to the Governor with a proud and lofty air. "We are not men," said he, "who would tell you falsehoods. If you doubt the truth of what the messengers have said, send one of us four to bring you some testimonial of the facts; and if he bring not back the Spaniard, or some satisfactory proof that he is alive and well, the three of us that remain in your hands will answer for his loss with our lives."

The proposition pleased the Governor and his officers; and after consultation, Baltazar de Gallegos, who was a friend and townsman of De Guzman, was instructed to write to him, condemning the step he had taken, and exhorting him to return and perform his duty as became a soldier; assuring him that his horse and arms should be restored, and others given to him in case of need. A message was also sent to

the Cacique, threatening him with fire and sword, unless he delivered up the fugitive.

Next day the messenger returned, bringing back the letter of Gallegos, with the name of De Guzman written upon it in charcoal; a proof that he was alive. He sent not a word, however, in reply to its contents; but the messenger declared that he had no intention nor wish to rejoin the army.

The Cacique, on his own part, sent word, assuring the Governor that he had used no force to detain Diego de Guzman, neither should he use any to compel him to depart; but would rather treat him with all possible honour and kindness as a son-in-law, who had restored to him a beloved daughter. He further declared that he would do the same to any of the strangers who might desire to remain with him. If, for having done his duty in this matter, the Governor thought proper to lay waste his lands and destroy his people, he had the power in his hands, and could act as he pleased.*

Moscoso, seeing that Diego de Guzman would not return, and feeling that the Cacique was justified in not delivering him up, abandoned all further attempt to recover him, and set the Indian chiefs at liberty, who continued, however, to attend him until he reached the frontier.

CHAPTER LV.

1542. THE next province traversed by the Spaniards was named Aguacay, and abounded with salt; they encamped one evening on the borders of a lake, the waters of which were strongly impregnated with it. The natives formed the salt into small cakes, by means of earthen moulds, and used it as an article of traffic. At the capital of this province, the Spaniards fancied, from the replies of its inhabitants to their questions, that they had some knowledge of the South Sea; but it is probable the Spaniards were deceived by the blunders of their interpreters.

After leaving Aguacay, they crossed the province of Maye, and on the twentieth of July, encamped beside a pleasant wood on the confines of Naguatex. They had scarcely come to a halt when a body of Indians were observed hovering at a distance. A party of horse immediately advanced, and

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Part 1. Lib. 5. c. 2.

dashing into the midst of them, killed six, and brought two prisoners to the camp. They confessed they were a scouting party sent by the Cacique to reconnoitre the strangers, and that Naguatex himself was at hand with his warriors, aided by two neighbouring chieftains. While they were yet talking, the enemy appeared in two battalions, and assailed the camp, but were soon put to flight. The horse pursued them, and fell into an ambush which had been laid for them by two other bands, but these they quickly succeeded in routing.

Two troopers and four foot soldiers having pursued the first party too hotly, were surrounded and assailed on all sides. The troopers behaved manfully, wheeling round their more exposed companions, charging the savages with their horses, and keeping them at bay with their spears, at the same time calling out lustily for aid. Their cries reaching the camp, twelve troopers galloped to their assistance: the Indians fled at their approach; but several were slain, and one of them was taken prisoner. Moscoso immediately ordered that his nose and right arm should be cut off, and sent him, thus cruelly mutilated, to Naguatex, with a threat that he would next morning enter his country with fire and sword.

The ensuing day Moscoso pushed forward to execute his threats, but a large river intervened between him and the Cacique's residence. He halted on the banks, and beheld a powerful force collected on the opposite side to oppose his passage. Not knowing the ford, and several of the men and horses being wounded, he took counsel in his wrath, and drawing back about a quarter of a league from the river, encamped near a village by a clear and beautiful wood, preferring the open air to any habitation, as the weather was calm and pleasant. Here he remained a few days, in order that his troops might have time to recover from their wounds and fatigues. During his stay, he sent a body of horse, who explored the river, forded it in two places, in spite of opposition from the natives, and found a populous and fruitful country on the other side.

The Governor, having now had time to recover from his anger, sent an Indian with a message to the Cacique of Naguatex, offering him pardon for the past, on condition of repentance and submission; but otherwise denouncing vengeance against him. The message had the desired effect.

The Indian returned with a reply from the Cacique, saying, that he would make his appearance next day. On the following morning a great number of Naguatex's principal subjects came to the Spanish camp, announced that their Cacique was at hand, and having apparently taken notice of the Governor's looks and the disposition of his men, returned to their Chieftain, who was shortly after seen approaching. A large body of his chief warriors marched two and two in front, all weeping and lamenting, as if in contrition for the past. When the head couple arrived in presence of Moscoso, the whole band halted, fell back on each side, and formed a lane, up which the Cacique advanced. Bending in a supplicating manner before the Governor, he begged forgiveness for what he had done, attributing his rash hostility to the bad counsels of one of his brothers, who had fallen in the fight. He acknowledged the Spaniards to be immortal, the Governor invincible, and concluded by tendering his obedience and services. Moscoso accepted his offered allegiance, dismissed him with assurances of friendship, and four days afterwards, breaking up his camp, he marched to the river side, but was surprised to find it swollen and impassable, although it was summer time, and no rain had fallen for a month. The Indians, however, assured him that this swelling of the river often happened without rain, and generally during the increase of the moon.

The Spaniards, perplexed at this phenomenon, being little acquainted with the great extent of these rivers, and the sudden effects of rain among the distant mountains and extensive prairies where they take their rise, surmised that the swellings, during the waxing of the moon, might be caused by the influx of the sea into the river, although none of the natives had any knowledge of the sea.

At the end of eight days the river had subsided sufficiently to be fordable. The army then crossed; but on coming to the Cacique's capital they found it abandoned. The Governor encamped in the open fields, and sent for Naguatex to come to him and furnish him with a guide. The Cacique, however, was afraid to venture into the camp. Upon this, the ire of Moscoso was again kindled, and he despatched two captains with troops of horse to burn the villages and make captives of the inhabitants. The country was soon wrapped in smoke and flame, and several natives were

captured. The Cacique was again brought to terms, and sent several of his subjects as hostages, together with three guides who understood the language of the countries through which the Spaniards were to pass. The Governor was pacified, and set forward on his march. Such were the circumstances that attended the Spaniards' sojourn in the province of Naguatex.*

CHAPTER LVI.

1542. THE army now pressed forward, by forced marches, for upwards of a hundred leagues, through various provinces, more or less populous and fertile; but some of them extremely barren and almost uninhabited. The Portuguese narrative of the expedition gives the names of some of these provinces, such as Missobone, Lacane, Mandacao, Socatino, and Guasco. In one province, the Spaniards observed wooden crosses placed on the tops of the houses, and were struck with the sight of this Christian emblem. They began to flatter themselves that they were approaching the confines of New Spain, and made inquiries in every province they entered, whether the inhabitants knew any Christian people to the west. Where all intelligence had to pass from mouth to mouth, through several interpreters, indifferently acquainted with each other's language, and finally to be communicated by an Indian lad, but moderately versed in Spanish, it is easy to perceive what vague and erroneous ideas must have been imparted. Some of the natives, it is probable, wilfully deceived the Spaniards; others misunderstood the kind of people about whom they were inquiring. In this way they received tidings, as they thought, of Europeans who had been seen further to the west; and whom, they persuaded themselves, were parties of discoverers making incursions from New Spain. They were elated with the hopes of meeting with some of these parties, or, at

* The name of this province is spelled in the same manner (Naguatex) both in the Spanish and Portuguese narratives. It has been identified with Nachitoches, by some modern writers, who suppose the Cacique's capital to have stood on the site of the present town of that name. It appears to the author, however, that the modern Nachitoches lies to the south of Moscoso's route, though it may have been called after the old Indian village, situated more to the northward. It is almost impossible to identify any of the places visited by the Spaniards in their wild wanderings west of the Mississippi.

any rate, of coming to regions subjugated and colonized by their countrymen, where they would no longer be in danger of perishing in a trackless wilderness, but might choose either to abide securely in the new world, or return to their native country.

Thus they went on, from place to place, lured by false hopes and idle tales. When they reached places where it had been asserted they would come upon the traces of white men, the inhabitants declared their utter ignorance of any such people. In a transport of disappointment, Moscoso ordered several poor savages to be put to the rack. This only served to extort false replies, suited to his wishes, but which led to further unprofitable wandering and additional disappointment.*

The Spanish commander and his followers, moreover, suffered extremely for want of intelligent and faithful guides. Sometimes they erred from misinterpretation of the routes, at others, they were purposely led astray. When they had journeyed far to the west, they came to a vast uninhabited region, where, after wandering for many days, until their provisions were exhausted, they had nothing to appease their hunger but herbs and roots. To their great dismay, also, they found that an old Indian warrior, who had been furnished by a Cacique as guide, was leading them in a circle. Moscoso, suspecting his fidelity, ordered him to be tied to a tree, and the dogs let loose upon him. One of them sprang upon him instantly, and began to shake him. The savage, in his terror, confessed that he had been ordered by his Cacique to bewilder them in uninhabited deserts, but offered to take them in three days to a populous country to the west. Moscoso, however, yielding to the impulses of his indignation at this treachery, again ordered the dogs to be let loose, who, ravenous with hunger, tore the unfortunate wretch to pieces.

Having thus gratified their passions, the Spaniards found themselves worse off than before, for they had no one to guide them, as permission had been given to the other Indians, who had brought the supplies, to return home. In this dilemma, they followed the directions of their victim, by marching westward; thus giving credit, after his death, to what they disbelieved while he was living.

They travelled three days, suffering excessively for want

of food. Fortunately the forests were clear and open; for had these been so thick as those which the troops had formerly traversed, they must have perished with hunger before they could have made their way through them. Travelling always towards the west, at the end of three days the Spaniards descried, from a rising ground, signs of human habitations; but on their approach they found the country generally barren and the villages abandoned. These differed from those they had before visited in other provinces, the houses being scattered about the fields in groups of four and five, rudely constructed, and resembling the hovels erected in melon-fields in Spain for the accommodation of persons employed to guard the fruit, rather than habitable houses. In these cabins they found abundance of fresh buffalo meat, with which they appeased their hunger. There were also the hides of many buffalos, recently flayed; but the Spaniards could never meet with the living animals. From the abundant traces of horned cattle thus found in the habitations they called this the Province of the Vaqueros, or Herdsmen.*

CHAPTER LVII.

1542. THE Indians of the Far West have always been noted for their gallant and martial bearing, and their proneness to feats of individual prowess. In their wandering through this wild region, the Spaniards witnessed frequent instances, two or three of which are worthy of especial notice. In the course of their march through the province of Los Vaqueros, having encamped one afternoon in an open plain, the soldiers stretched themselves on the ground, while their native attendants prepared their repast. As they were thus enjoying their repose, they observed an Indian warrior sally out of an adjacent wood and approach the camp. He was gaily painted; a bow was in his hand, a quiver of arrows over his right shoulder, and waving plumes adorned his head.

The Spaniards seeing him advance alone, and peacefully, imagining that he was charged with some message from his Cacique to the Governor, allowed him to draw nigh. He

* It is evident that the Spaniards were on the hunting grounds of the Far West—the great buffalo prairies; and most probably the scattered and slight wigwams thus visited were mere hunting camps.

came within fifty paces of a group of soldiers, who were conversing together; then, suddenly fixing an arrow in his bow, he sent it into the midst of them.

Seeing him bend his bow, some of the Spaniards sprang aside, others threw themselves upon the ground. The arrow whistled by without touching them, but flying beyond, where five or six female Indians were preparing dinner for their masters, under a tree, it struck one in the shoulders, and passing through her body, buried itself in the bosom of another;—both fell and expired. The savage then turned, and fled with surprising speed to the woods. The Spaniards beat the alarm and shouted after him. Baltazar de Gallegos, being by chance on horseback, heard the shout, and saw the savage flying; suspecting the cause, he gave chase, overtook him close to the wood, and transfixed him with his lance. Three days after this, the army halted for a day in a beautiful plain of the same province. During their halt they saw two Indian warriors crossing the plain. They were fine looking fellows, decorated with lofty plumes, bearing their bows in their hands, and their quivers at their backs. They came to within two hundred paces of the camp, and then began to walk round a large nut-tree, not side by side, but circling in opposite directions, so as to pass each other, and guard one another's backs. In this way they continued all day, without deigning to notice the Negroes, Indians, women, and boys who occasionally passed near them, carrying water and wood.

The Spaniards understanding from this that the object of the coming of these Indians referred to them and not to their own countrymen, forthwith reported what they had observed to the Governor, who ordered that no soldier should go out to them.

The savages continued their circumvolutions waiting patiently, as it would seem, for some of the Spaniards to take up this singular challenge. It was near sunset when a company of horse, who had been out since morning scouring the country, returned to the camp. Their quarters happening to be near the place where this extraordinary scene was acting, observing it, they asked, "What Indians are these?" Having learnt the Governor's order that the savages should not be molested, all obeyed except a headlong soldier named Juan Paez, who eager to exhibit his valour, spurred towards

them. When the Indians saw but a single Spaniard advancing to attack them, the one who was nearest to Paez stepped forth to receive him, and the other retiring placed himself under a tree; thus showing a desire of fighting man to man, and disregarding the Spaniard's advantage in being mounted. The soldier charged the savage at full speed, but the latter waited with an arrow in his bow until his adversary came within shot; he then sped his shaft. It struck Juan Paez in the muscular part of the left arm, passed through it and through both sides of a sleeve of mail, and remained crossed in the wound. The arm dropped powerless, the reins slipped from his hand, and the horse feeling them fall, stopped of a sudden, as horses are often trained to do.

The companions of Juan Paez, who had not yet alighted, seeing his peril, galloped to his rescue. The Indians, not choosing to encounter such odds, fled to a neighbouring wood, but before they could reach it were overtaken and lanced to death. In this affair the savages certainly showed a spirit of chivalry and a punctilio as to the laws of duel, which merited a better return at the hands of Spanish cavaliers.*

CHAPTER LVIII.

1542. AFTER traversing the wild waste of country which the Spaniards named the Province of Los Vaqueros, they came to a river called Daycao,—a favourite hunting resort of the Indians. Great quantities of deer were feeding along its banks. Having learned that the country beyond was inhabited, Moscoso sent a party of horse to cross the river and reconnoitre the neighbourhood. They found a village consisting of a few miserable hovels, and captured two of the inhabitants; but none of the interpreters could understand their language.

The Spaniards now perceiving a chain of mountains and extensive forests to the west, and ascertaining that the country was without inhabitants, their hearts began to fail them. The hunger and toil they had already experienced rendered them loath to penetrate those savage regions. The Governor, therefore, determined to remain encamped and send out light parties to explore the country in the direction they were

* Garcilase de la Vega, L. 5. p. 2. c. 4.

travelling. Three bands of horsemen being accordingly despatched each in a different direction, and having penetrated to the distance of thirty leagues, they found it sterile, thinly peopled, and ascertained that these evils would increase the further they proceeded. They captured some of the inhabitants, who assured them that further on it was still more destitute; the natives neither living in villages, dwelling in houses, nor cultivating the soil, but were a wandering people roving in bands, gathering fruits and herbs and roots of spontaneous growth, depending occasionally upon hunting and fishing for subsistence, and passing from place to place according as the seasons were favourable to their pursuits.*

At the end of fifteen days the exploring parties had all returned to the camp, bringing nearly the same accounts. Their united reports embarrassed the Governor not a little. To prosecute his march to New Spain through such a country as that described would be to run the risk of losing himself and his troops in barren and trackless deserts. Recollecting what had been related by Alvar Nuñez of tribes of Indians which he had met with unsettled in their abodes, wandering about like wild Arabs, feeding on roots and herbs and the produce of the chase, Moscoso fancied that similar savage hordes roved about the country before him. Indeed it was probable that all the rumours he had heard of Christians seen by the Indians might relate to Alvar Nuñez and his companions, who, on their way to New Spain, after their shipwreck, with Pamphilo de Narvaez, had passed as captives from tribe to tribe in traversing these lands. It is true they kept near the sea-coast, far to the south of the track of Moscoso, but the fame of such wonderful strangers might have penetrated to the interior; for reports are carried to vast distances among Indian tribes. The crosses also observed by Moscoso in one of the provinces through which he had passed, might have been put up by the natives as talismans, in consequence of the fame of apparently miraculous cures performed by Alvar Nuñez and his men, who always carried a cross in their hands, and made the sign of the cross over their patients.

The delusive reports, therefore, of Christians to the West which had encouraged the Spaniards to proceed, had now

* This description answers to the character and habits of the Pawnees, Comanches, and other tribes of the Far West.

died away. They had nothing but savage wastes before them, infested by a barbarous people, with whom it was impossible to keep up a friendly understanding for want of interpreters. It was already the beginning of October; if they lingered much longer the rains and snows of winter would cut off their return, and they might perish with cold and hunger. Moscoso was weary in soul and body, and longed to be in a place where his sleep might not be broken by continual alarms. Calling a council of his officers, he proposed that they should give up all further progress to the west, make the best of their way back to the Mississippi, build vessels there and descend that river to the ocean.

The proposition was by no means relished by some, who, notwithstanding all their sufferings and disappointments, had still a lingering hope of finding a country sufficiently rich to repay them for all their toils. They represented that Alvar Nuñez Caboza de Vaca had told the Emperor of his having visited a district where cotton grew, and where he saw gold, silver, and precious stones; it was consequently evident they had not yet come to those regions of which Alvar Nuñez spoke, but might do so by keeping forward. Besides, they had actually met with cotton mantles and turquoises at a province called Guasco, and had understood from the natives that these were brought from a country to the west, which was doubtless the country that Alvar Nuñez had spoken of. They were, therefore, for persisting in their perilous march westward; nay, some of them declared they would rather perish in the wilderness than return beggared and miserable to Europe from an expedition undertaken with such high and vaunting anticipations.

More prudent councils, however, prevailed, and after much deliberation it was determined to retrace their steps to the Mississippi.

NOTE.—The march of Moscoso west of the Mississippi has been given from the Spanish and Portuguese accounts; but they vary so much on some points, and are so vague on others; the regions to which they relate are so vast, and, until very recently, were so little known, that it is next to impossible to trace the wanderers' route with anything approaching to precision. They evidently traversed the hunting grounds of the Far West, the range of the buffalo, and got upon the upper prairies, which, in many parts, are little better than deserts. The river Decayo, which is only mentioned by the Portuguese narrator, has been supposed to be the "Rio del Oro" of Cabeza de Vaca. He makes them return from the banks of this river; but the Spanish historian affirms, that they saw great chains of mountains and forests to the west, which they understood were uninhabited.

It has been conjectured that these were the skirts of the Rocky Mountains. As, according to the Portuguese account, the Spaniards departed from the banks of the Mississippi for the Far West on the fifth of June, and did not get back until the beginning of December, they were six months on this march and countermarch, which, with all their halting, would give them time to penetrate a great distance into the interior.

CHAPTER LIX.

1542. THE Spaniards had now a long and dreary march before them, with no favourable prospect to cheer them on, and a country to traverse, the savage inhabitants of which had been rendered hostile by their previous invasion, and its resources laid waste by their foraging parties. They endeavoured, as much as possible, to remedy these disadvantages by altering their course towards the south, so as to avoid the desolate tracts which they had recently traversed, and in hopes of finding regions more abundant in provisions.

They travelled by forced marches, taking every precaution not to provoke the natives; the latter, however, were on the alert, and harassed them at all hours of the day and night. Sometimes the Indians concealed themselves in woods, by which the Spaniards had to pass; in the more open country they lay on the ground covered by tall grass and weeds, and as the soldiers, seeing no enemy, came carelessly along, the wily savages suddenly sprang up, discharged their arrows, and immediately made their escape.

These assaults were so frequent, that one band was scarcely repulsed by the vanguard when another attacked the rear, and the line of march was often assailed in three or four places at the same time, by which the army suffered great loss, both of men and horses. In fact, in this province of Los Vaqueros, the Spaniards, without coming hand to hand with the enemy, received more injury than in any other through which they passed: this especially happened in the course of the last day's march, during which their route was extremely arduous, laying through woods, and across streams and ravines, and other dangerous passes, peculiarly fit for ambush and surprise. Here the savages, who were well acquainted with the ground, had them at their mercy, way-laying them at every step, wounding men and horses, and the native servants who accompanied the army.

The last of these assaults happened as they crossed a brook overhung with trees and thickets, shortly before their arrival at the place of encampment. Just as one of the horsemen, named Sanjurge, was in the middle of the stream, an arrow, discharged from among the bushes on the bank, struck him in the rear, pierced his cuirass of mail, passed through the muscles of his right thigh, then through the saddle-tree and paddings, and buried itself in the horse. The wounded animal sprang out of the water, galloped to the plain, and went on plunging and kicking to disengage itself from the arrow and its rider.

Sanjurge's comrades hastened to his assistance. Finding him nailed, in a manner, to the saddle, and the army having halted close by, they led him on horseback to his allotted quarters. Lifting him gently from his seat, they cut the shaft between the saddle and the wound; after which, taking off the saddle, they found that the injury to the horse was slight. What surprised them, however, was, that the shaft, which had penetrated through so many substances, was a mere reed, with the end hardened in the fire. Such was the vigour of arm with which these Indian archers plied their bows.

This Sanjurge had enjoyed a kind of charlatan reputation among the soldiers, for curing wounds with oil, wool, and by certain words, which he called a charm. All the oil and wool, however, having been burnt at the battle of Mauvila, Sanjurge's miraculous cures were at an end. His whole surgical skill being confined to his nostrum and charm, he was now fain to call in the aid of the surgeon to extract the head of an arrow lodged in his knee. This caused him so much pain, that he railed at the operator for a bungler, swearing that he would rather die than be placed again under his hands. The surgeon replied, that he might die before he would have any thing further to do with him.

In his present wounded state, therefore, Sanjurge was in a sad dilemma, having no nostrums of his own, and the surgeon refusing to visit him. At length he thought of a substitute for his old remedy; making use of hog's lard, instead of oil, and the shreds of an Indian mantle, instead of wool, he dressed his wound with them, and pronounced his vaunted charm. Faith and a good constitution work miracles in quackery. In the course of four days Sanjurge had so far recovered as to

resume his saddle, galloping up and down among the soldiers, whose belief in the efficacy of his nostrum and charm became stronger than ever.*

CHAPTER LX.

1542. AFTER quitting the disastrous province of Los Vaqueros, the Spaniards continued for twenty days, by forced marches, through other lands, of which they did not know the name, taking little pains to gain information, their only object now being to reach the Mississippi.

Although they avoided all pitched battles with the natives, they continued to be harassed by them incessantly. If a soldier chanced to wander a short distance from his comrades, he was instantly shot. In this manner no less than forty Spaniards were picked off by lurking foes. By night the Indians would enter the camp on all-fours, and drawing themselves along like snakes, without being heard, shoot horses, and even sentinels who were off their guard.

One day, when the army was about to march, Francisco, the Genoese carpenter, obtained the Governor's permission for himself and several troopers, who were in want of servants, to lie in ambush at the place of encampment; the Indians being accustomed to visit those places as soon as the Spaniards had abandoned them, to pick up any articles the latter might have left behind.

Accordingly, a dozen horse and twelve foot concealed themselves in a thick clump of trees, one of their companions climbing to the top of the highest to look out and give notice if any Indians approached. In four sallies they captured fourteen of the enemy without resistance. These they divided among themselves, two falling to the share of Francisco, the shipwright, as leader of the detachment. The party would then have rejoined the army, but Francisco refused, alleging that he wanted another Indian, and would not return until he had captured one.

All the efforts of his comrades to shake this determination were vain. Each offered to give up the Indian that had fallen to his share, but their leader refused to accept the boon. Yielding, therefore, to his obstinacy, they remained with him in ambush.

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Part 2. Lib. 5. c. 5.

In a little while the sentinel in the tree gave warning that an Indian was near. One of the horsemen, the same Juan Paez who had recently been wounded in the arm, dashed forward with his wonted impetuosity, and rode at him full speed. The Indian, as usual, taking refuge under a tree, Paez galloped close by him, giving a passing thrust with his lance across the left arm at the savage. He missed his aim, but his enemy was more successful; for, as the horse passed, he drew an arrow to the head, and buried it just behind the left stirrup leather. The horse plunged several paces forward and fell dead. Francisco de Bolanos, a comrade and townsman of Paez, followed close behind him, attacked the Indian in the same way, and failing likewise in his blow, his horse received a similar wound, and went stumbling forward beside his predecessor.

The two dismounted horsemen recovering from their fall, attacked the foe with their lances, while from the other side, a cavalier, named Juan de Vega, galloped towards him on horseback. The savage, thus assailed on both sides, rushed forth from under the tree to encounter the horsemen, knowing that if he should kill the horse, he could easily escape from his dismounted antagonists by his superior swiftness of foot.

With this intent, as the animal came towards him full speed, he discharged at its breast an arrow, which would have cleft its heart but for a breast-plate of three folds of tough bull-hide with which its rider had provided it. The arrow passed through the breast-plate, and penetrated a hand's breadth into the flesh; nevertheless the horse continued its career, and Juan de Vega transfixed the savage with his lance.

The Spaniards, grieved for the loss of the two horses, the more valuable now that their number was so much diminished; but their chagrin was doubly heightened when they observed the enemy who had cost them so dear. Instead of being well made and muscular, like most of the natives, he was small, lank, and diminutive; his form giving no promise of the energy of his spirit. Cursing their misfortune, and the wilfulness of Francisco, which had caused it, they set forward with their companions to rejoin the army.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, P. 2. Lib. 5. c. 5 and 6.

CHAPTER LXI.

1542. THE Spaniards continued their weary journey with similar disastrous adventures. Fearful of going too far south, and of arriving at the Mississippi below the province of Guachoya, which was the point they wished to reach, they inclined to the north-east, so as to get into the track they had made on their western course.

This led them back through the province of Naguateg, where they found the villages which they had burnt, already rebuilt, and the houses well stocked with maize. In this province the natives made earthenware of a tolerably good quality.

In passing through the province of Chaguete, Moscoso thought of Diego de Guzman, who had taken refuge among the natives, and sent twelve troopers in search of him; but he had received notice of their approach from the Indian spies, and concealed himself. The army, in the mean time, were suffering from scarcity of food, so that the Governor, seeing Guzman was bent upon remaining among his new friends, gave up all further search after him, and proceeded on his march.

The winter now set in with great rigour: it was accompanied with heavy rains, violent gales, and extreme cold; yet, in their eagerness to arrive at the termination of their journey, the troops continued to press forward, travelling all day, and arriving at their place of encampment just before nightfall, drenched with rain, and covered with mud. They had then to go in quest of food, and were generally compelled to obtain it by force of arms, and sometimes at the expense of many lives.

The rivers became swollen by the rain; even the brooks were no longer fordable, so that almost every day the soldiers were obliged to make rafts to cross them. At some of the rivers they were detained seven or eight days, by the unceasing opposition of their enemies, and the want of sufficient materials for constructing rafts. Often, too, at night they had no place to lie upon, the ground being covered with mud and water. The cavalry passed the night sitting upon their horses, and the water was up to the knees of the infantry. For clothing, they had merely jackets of chamois

and other skins, belted round them, which served for shirt, doublet, and coat, and was almost always wet through. They were in general bare-legged, without shoes or sandals.

Both men and horses began to sicken and die under such dreadful privations. Every day two, three, and at one time, seven Spaniards fell victims to the hardships of this journey, and almost all the Indian servants perished. There were no means of carrying the sick and dying, for many of the horses were infirm, and those that were well were reserved to repel the constant attacks of a vigilant enemy. The sick, therefore, dragged their steps forward as long as they could, and often died by the way, while the survivors, in their haste to proceed, scarcely stayed to bury them, but left them half covered with earth, and sometimes entirely unburied. Yet, in spite of sickness and exhaustion, the army never failed to post sentinels, and keep up their camp-guard at night in order to prevent surprise.

At length they arrived at the fertile province of Anilco, the Cacique of which had experienced such rough treatment from them and their savage ally, Guachoya, on their previous visit. They had been cheering themselves on their march with the prospect of relief in this province, which abounded in maize, and of procuring a sufficient supply to sustain them during the time necessary for the construction of their vessels; to their bitter disappointment, however, they found the province of Anilco almost destitute of maize, and had the additional mortification of knowing that they were the cause of this scarcity. The hostilities they had pursued against Anilco, during their residence at Guachoya, had deterred the inhabitants from cultivating their lands; thus seed-time passed unimproved, and the year had produced no harvest.

Many of the Spaniards, worn out by past trials, could not support this new disappointment, but gave way to despair. Without a supply of maize, it would be impossible to subsist through the winter, or to sustain the daily and protracted toils of building the vessels for their departure. Their imaginations magnified the difficulties before them, and painted every thing in the most gloomy colours. How were they to construct vessels fitted to stand a sea voyage, destitute as they were of pitch and tar, of sails and cordage? How were they to navigate, without map, or sea-chart, or pilot?—how

were they to ascertain at what place the great river on which they were to embark mingled with the ocean? They sorely lamented having returned from the Far West, and given up their project of reaching New Spain by land. As to the plan of escaping by sea, it seemed as if nothing short of a miracle could enable them to carry it into effect.

Such were the despondings of many; and, indeed, a general gloom prevailed through the camp, when they were again encouraged by intelligence derived from some Indians of Anilco, who told them, that, at the distance of two days' journey, on the banks of the Mississippi, there were two towns near each other, in the country of Aminoya, in which they would probably find maize and other provisions in abundance.

On receiving this cheering intelligence, Moscoso immediately despatched Juan de Añasco, with a strong party of horse and foot, to visit those places.* They were accompanied by several Indians of Anilco, who were at war with those of Aminoya. After a severe march of two days, they arrived at the towns, which were situated close together, in an open country, and surrounded by a creek or ditch, filled with water from the Mississippi, so as to form an island.

De Añasco entered the towns without opposition, the inhabitants having abandoned them on their approach. To the great joy of the Spaniards, the houses were abundantly stocked with maize and other grain; likewise with vegetables, nuts, acorns, and dried fruits, such as grapes and plums. In one house they found an old woman, too infirm to make her escape. She asked them why they came thither. They replied, to winter. The old beldam shook her head, and told them that was no place for winter quarters. Every fourteen years, she said, there was such a rise of the great river as to inundate all the surrounding country, and compel the inhabitants to take refuge in the upper part of their houses. This, she added, was the fourteenth year, and an inundation was to be expected. The Spaniards, however, made light of her warning, considering it an old wife's fable, without reflecting that ancient inhabitants are generally the chroniclers of local fact.

* Portuguese Relation, c. 35.

CHAPTER LXII.

1542. HAVING fixed himself in one of the towns, De Añasco sent advice to the Governor of his success, and of the abundance around him. Moscoso immediately set off with the remainder of the army to join him. Notwithstanding their prospect of speedy repose and good quarters, this was as hard a march as any the troops had yet experienced. Enfeebled by sickness and famine, they had to traverse several swamps, in a drenching storm of rain, accompanied with a bitter north wind.

The hearts of the poor wayworn Spaniards leaped within them when they once more came in sight of the Mississippi, for they regarded it as the highway by which they were to escape out of this land of disaster. They entered the village of Aminoya as a haven of repose, and thanked God that they had at length reached a spot where they might rest awhile from their toils. Indeed, had they not at this juncture found a seasonable supply, it is probable most of them would have perished under the extreme rigours and privations of the winter. As it was, many reached this place of rest but to die. The excitement of the march had stimulated them beyond their strength; when exertion was no longer necessary, they fell into a lethargy, and, in the course of a few days, above fifty expired.

Among those who had thus survived the toils and perils of the march to perish in this place of refuge was Andres de Vasconcellos, a Portuguese cavalier of noble blood, who had distinguished himself on various occasions in the course of this fatal enterprise.

No one, however, was more lamented by the army than the brave Nuño Tobar, a cavalier no less valiant and noble, than unfortunate. Having had the misfortune, at the outset of the enterprise, to displease De Soto by the indulgence of a criminal passion, he had never been forgiven, although he had repaired his injury to the lady by marriage, and atoned to his commander by repeated acts of chivalrous bravery. On the contrary, he had ever been treated by De Soto with a rigour and disdain, from which his great services should have shielded him; nor had he been restored to his military rank under that general's successor, Moscoso.

Seeing the favourable situation of the village of Aminoya, and the fruitfulness of the surrounding country, the Governor resolved to establish his winter quarters, and build his brigantines here.* It is true, it was about sixteen leagues above the residence of Guachoya, where he had intended to winter, but that was immaterial; the grand object was attained, a secure place on the Mississippi for the construction of vessels, for his proposed embarkation. In order to render his position more comfortable and secure, he destroyed one of the two adjacent villages, and carried all its provisions, wood, and other necessaries to the other. This being surrounded by pallisades, he set about strengthening its defences, but such was the debilitated state of his men, that it cost him twenty days to accomplish the work. Being now, however, in good quarters, with plenty of food, and suffering no molestation from the natives, they soon began to recover from their fatigues and maladies, and with the renovation of their strength, their spirits likewise revived.

They now set to work to construct seven brigantines for the embarkation of all their forces. These were built under the superintendence of Francisco, the Genoese, the same who, on various occasions, had been so proficient in constructing bridges, rafts, and boats, being the only person in the army who knew any thing of ship-building. He was assisted by four or five carpenters of Biscay. Another Genoese, and a Catalonian, skilled as their countrymen usually are in nautical affairs, engaged to caulk the vessels.

A Portuguese, who, having been a slave among the Moors of Fez, had learned the use of the saw, instructed some of the soldiers in the art. He undertook to reduce the timber felled in the neighbouring forests into suitable planks; while a cooper, who was almost at death's door, promised, as soon as he should be able to work, to make water-casks for the vessels.

Every bit of iron was now collected in order to be converted into articles necessary for the construction of the vessels. Their chains were knocked off the Indian captives; even the troopers' iron stirrups were given up and wooden ones substituted. A forge was erected to work up these ma-

* Mr. M'Culloch supposes the village of Aminoya to have been situated in the neighbourhood of the present town of Helena, about thirty miles above the Arkansa.

terials into the necessary forms, and thus the whole undertaking soon began to wear an encouraging aspect.

Assistance was also rendered from other quarters. Guachoya, the old friend and ally of the Spaniards, hearing of their return, came with presents of provisions and renewed his former intercourse. The Cacique Anilco also, taught by the severe treatment he had brought upon himself by former hostility, now sent his Captain-General with a numerous retinue, entreating the Governor's friendship, and pleading ill-health as an excuse for not coming in person. The Captain-General was received with great ceremony and respect; he was shrewd and intelligent, and acquitted himself with great address in his intercourse with the Spaniards. He mingled among them familiarly, acquainted himself with their plans and wishes, and transmitted an account of every thing to his Cacique, who immediately contributed all the assistance in his power. Every day or two came supplies from Anilco of fish and other provisions, together with different materials for the ships, such as cordage of various sizes, made of grass and fibrous plants, and mantles woven from an herb resembling mallows, containing a fibre like flax, which the Indians wrought into thread, and dyed of many colours.

Guachoya emulated Anilco in supplying the wants of the Spaniards, but fell short of him in assiduity. Both Caciques furnished numbers of their subjects to serve in the camp, and to do the rough work of the ships.

In order to carry on their shipbuilding without interruption from storms and inundations, the Spaniards erected four large buildings. Within these, both officers and men toiled without distinction, sawing planks, twisting cordage, making oars, and hammering out iron. The only pride shown was in striving who should do the most work.

The cordage furnished by Anilco was made into rigging and cables, and when this was not sufficient, the rinds of mulberry trees were substituted. The Indian mantles, when sound and entire, were formed into sails, the old ones being picked into shreds to caulk the vessels. For this latter purpose, also, use was made of an herb resembling hemp, called Enequen; and in place of tar, the seams were payed with the rosin and gum of various trees, and with an unctuous kind of earth.

During the whole winter the Captain-General of Anilco

was continually with the Spaniards, officiating as the representative of his Cacique, mingling in all their concerns, administering to their wants, and seemingly taking as much interest in their plans as if they had been his own. His important services, and the hearty good will with which they were rendered, made him so popular with both officers and soldiers, that he received on all occasions the same honours as would have been paid to his Cacique.

All this awakened the jealousy and anger of Guachoya. He had secretly sought to revive former hostilities between the Spaniards and Anilco, but his intrigues had been baffled. His spleen at length broke forth in presence of the Governor and his officers, on some new honours being paid to the Captain-General, whom he represented as a mere servant and vassal, base in origin, poor in circumstances, and remonstrated with the Spaniards for paying more respect to a man of such mean condition, than to a powerful chieftain.

The General of Anilco listened with a calm, unchanging countenance, until Guachoya had finished; then asking permission of Moscoso, he replied with generous warmth, showing his honourable descent from the same ancestors as his Cacique, and his high standing, being second only to his chieftain, and commander of his forces. He reminded Guachoya of victories which he had gained over his father, himself, and his brothers, all of whom he had, at different times, had in his power and treated magnanimously; finally, as a mortal trial of prowess, he challenged Guachoya to enter alone into a canoe, that he would enter into another, and then each should launch his boat into the Mississippi. The abode of Guachoya lay several leagues down the river, that of the General of Anilco as far up the tributary stream which entered into the Mississippi. The challenger proposed that he who should survive the mortal struggle of the voyage and navigate his canoe to his home should be declared victor.

The Captain-General of Anilco concluded his indignant speech, but Guachoya neither accepted the challenge nor answered a word, but remained with confused and downcast countenance. From that time forward Anilco's General was held in higher estimation than ever by the Spanish army.*

* Garcilaso de la Vega, Lib. 5. p. 2. c. 10.

CHAPTER LXIII.

1543. WHILE the Spaniards were diligently employed in building their brigantines, the natives of the surrounding provinces were plotting their destruction. On the opposite side of the Mississippi, a few leagues below Aminoya, extended the vast, fruitful, and populous province of Quigualtanqui;—the same which had been visited by a scouting party despatched by the late Hernando De Soto during his halt at Guachoya; on which occasion the reader may recollect several taunting messages were sent by the Cacique to the Governor. The Cacique of Quigualtanqui was young and warlike; beloved throughout his extensive dominions, and feared by his neighbours on account of his great power.

Retaining his former enmity to the Spaniards, he learnt with alarm that they were again in his neighbourhood and building large barks, which might give them the command of the river, or enable them to quit the country and return in greater force to conquer it. He consequently sent envoys to the neighbouring Caciques on both sides of the river, and a league was formed to combine their forces at a certain time for a general assault upon the Spaniards.

The Cacique of Anilco was invited to enter into the league, but he remained true to his Christian allies, and sent the Governor secret intelligence of the conspiracy. Moscoso immediately ordered additional guards to be stationed about the camp, patrols to be kept up night and day, and vigilant watch maintained over those places where the arms and ammunition were deposited. Envoys arrived at all hours of the day and night from the Cacique of Quigualtanqui and his allies, bearing offers of friendship and various presents. The Governor perceived, by their roving about the camp and taking note of every thing, that they were mere spies, he therefore gave orders that no Indian should be admitted into the village by night: these orders, however, were disregarded.

One night, Gonzalo Silvestre, with a comrade, was on duty at one of the gates. He was just recovering from severe illness, and still feeble. About mid-watch, in the clear moonlight, he saw two Indians approaching, with bows and arrows in their hands, and lofty plumes upon their heads. They advanced towards the gate across a fallen tree, which

served as a bridge over the fosse. Silvestre, who knew the Governor's orders and the lurking treachery which surrounded them, felt his blood boil at sight of these intruders. "Here are two savages," said he to his comrade; "how dare they come at night, in defiance of the Governor's prohibition! By the mass, the first that enters this gate shall feel the edge of my sword."

His comrade begged him to leave the Indian to him, as he was strong and well, and Silvestre but feeble. "By no means," replied the other, "I am strong enough to give these impudent savages a lesson."

The Indians drew nigh, and finding the gate open, entered without hesitation. In an instant, Silvestre gave the foremost a blow in the face with his sword, and felled him to the earth. The savage recovered himself, snatched up his bow and arrows, and plunging into the fosse, swam to the other side. His companion sprang over the fallen tree, and leaping into his canoe, made the best of his way across the Mississippi.

At sunrise, four native warriors appeared in the camp, complaining, in the name of all the neighbouring Caciques, of this violation of the peace existing between them, and demanding that as the wounded Indian was a warrior of rank, the soldier who struck him should be put to death. A similar embassy was repeated at noon, and in the evening a third, announcing that the warrior had died of his wound.

Luis de Moscoso gave evasive and haughty replies to the ambassadors, which greatly incensed the chieftains of the league. They concealed their rage, however, consoling themselves with the idea that the day of vengeance was at hand. In the mean time each Cacique assembled his warriors, and prepared for a signal blow. Their plan was to burst suddenly upon the Spaniards, and massacre every one of them. Should they fail in this, they proposed setting fire to the hulks of the vessels, and thus preventing their departure. They might then, as they imagined, exterminate their foes by degrees; for they were aware of their diminished numbers, and that but few horses, the chief objects of their terror, survived:—above all, they knew that the brave Hernando de Soto was no more.

The Spaniards were aware that the momentous day was at hand; for some of the spies who visited the camp had

comforted the captives with assurances of speedy deliverance and revenge—all which the native women had revealed to their masters. Added to this, as the nights were still and serene, they could hear the murmuring sound of Indian gatherings on both sides of the river, and see the camp-fires gleaming in different directions.

When this storm of war was about to burst upon the Spaniards, there came on a sudden rising of the waters. The prediction of the old Indian woman was verified. Although there had been no rain for several weeks, yet the Mississippi, in the month of March, swelled above its banks, and inundated the country for several leagues. The green fields and forests were transformed into a broad sea,—the branches and tops of the trees rising above the surface, and canoes gliding between them in every direction. The town in which the Spanish army was quartered stood on a rising ground, yet the water rose to the lower stories of the houses, and obliged the troops to take refuge in the garrets, or on sheds erected on strong piles. They had to quarter their horses in the same manner; and for some time it was impossible to go abroad, except in canoes, or on horseback, when the water reached the rider's stirrups. It was in consequence of these inundations, says the Spanish historian, that the Indians built their villages on high hills, or artificial mounds. The houses of the chieftains were often erected upon piles, with upper floors, where they might take refuge from the freshets.

CHAPTER LXIV.

1543. THE swelling of the Mississippi and inundation of the surrounding country, dispersed the hordes of savages, and forced them to take refuge in their villages. The Caciques, however, did not abandon their design, but maintained an appearance of friendship, sending repeated messages and presents. Moscoso, ordered a vigilant watch to be kept about the village, and especially over the brigantines, permitting no Indians to approach them in their canoes, through fear of some treacherous intention.

The swollen river subsided as slowly as it had risen, and it was two months before it shrank within its natural channel. As soon as the surface of the country was sufficiently dry,

the Caciques again collected their forces for the premeditated attack.

Anilco's General gave the Governor warning of their movements, and offered to bring a large force of Indians to assist him; but Moscoso declined his offer, lest the services of this generous Chief should embroil him with his neighbours, after the Spaniards' departure.

Anxious to procure particular information of the conspirators' plans, Moscoso ordered a native, who was loitering about the town, and whom he suspected to be a spy, to be put to the rack. This is always a sure mode of forcing round assertions, whether true or false. The savage, under torture, declared that twenty Caciques of the neighbourhood were about to attack the camp with a large army:—that, to put the Governor off his guard and conceal their own treachery, they were to send a present of fish three days before the attack, and another on the appointed day; that the Indians who brought the fish, having first joined such of their countrymen as served in the camp, were to seize upon all weapons at hand, and set fire to the houses;—at the sight of the flames, the Caciques, with their troops, were to rush from the places where they lay in ambush, and in the height of their confusion, assail the Spaniards on all sides.

The Governor having heard this story, ordered the Indian to be kept in chains. On the day mentioned, thirty natives came into the town, bearing presents of fish and messages of kindness. The Governor immediately ordered them to be seized, taken aside separately, and examined concerning the conspiracy. They attempted no defence, but made a full confession of the plot. Moscoso, with his usual rigour, ordered forthwith that their right hands should be cut off, and that thus mutilated, they should be sent back to their Caciques, to give them warning that their treachery was discovered. The stoical savages bore this dreadful punishment without flinching; scarcely was the hand of one stricken off, when another laid his arm upon the block. Their patience and firmness extorted the pity and admiration even of their enemies.

This sanguinary punishment of their envoys put an end to the league of the Caciques, who gave up their plan of attacking the camp, and returned, each to his province, but with hearts bent on further hostility.

Guachoya had more than once been suspected by the Spaniards of secret participation in this plot, and had even been charged with it by the Indian spy, when under torture. There does not, however, appear to have been any proof of this; and, indeed, all these stories of plots and conspiracies related by Indians of each other, are to be received with great distrust. The Spaniards, doubtless, were often deceived by their allies, who sought through their means to cripple their rivals; and they brought upon themselves much needless hostility by their harsh measures to punish or prevent imputed treason.

Moscoso and his officers, convinced of their perilous situation, thus surrounded by open and secret foes, applied themselves assiduously to complete their armament, and provide stores for the voyage. Guachoya, conscious of the late suspicions entertained of him, redoubled his zeal in furnishing maize, fish, and other supplies, and Anilco continued his friendly offices to the last. Throughout all their wanderings the Spaniards had preserved a number of the swine which they had brought with them to stock their intended settlement. These had, in fact, multiplied during the march, and others which had strayed or been given to the Indians, had likewise produced their increase. The Spaniards now killed those that remained, except a dozen and half which they retained alive, in case they should yet form a settlement near the sea-coast, and a few which they presented to Anilco and Guachoya. The carcasses were then cut up and made into bacon for ships' provisions. Of fifty horses that remained, they determined that twenty of the least valuable should be killed for food. This was a painful alternative, on account of their long companionship in danger, and the faithful services they had rendered. The poor animals were tied to stakes at night, a vein was opened, and they were thus left to bleed to death. Their flesh was then parboiled, dried in the sun, and laid up among the sea stores. Canoes were linked together, two and two, to convey the rest, their forefeet being placed in one canoe and their hind feet in another, and the canoes barricaded with boards and hides to ward off the arrows of their foes.

When the brigantines were ready for service, there was such an unusual swelling of the river, that the water reached the stocks, on which they stood, so that they were launched

with great ease. This was a fortunate circumstance, for being built of very thin planks, and fastened with short nails, they might have bulged in being transported overland. These vessels were merely large barks, open, except at the bow and stern, where they had covered decks to protect the sea stores. Bulwarks of boards and hides extended along the gunwales, and planks were laid athwart them to serve as decks. Each had seven oars on either side, at which all the Spaniards, except the captains, were to take their turns indiscriminately. Every brigantine had two commanders, so that in emergencies one might act on land, while the other remained on board.

The little squadron being now afloat and all ready for embarkation, Moscoso made his final arrangements on shore. Two days before his departure he took a kind farewell of Guachoya, and the Captain-General of Anilco, sending them both back to their homes, first making them promise to live in friendship with each other after he was gone. Next day he dismissed the greater part of those Indians, male and female, who had been in the service of his camp, retaining such only, of either sex, as belonged to distant tribes, and had followed the army in its wanderings. But not above thirty survived, out of a multitude which, from time to time, had been captured and reduced to servitude in the course of their extensive marchings. The rest had perished by degrees, under their various hardships. These survivors had, for the most part, become attached to the Spaniards, and, moreover, dreaded being left among the strange tribes, who might enslave and maltreat them.*

CHAPTER LXV.

1543. On the second day of July, the Spaniards embarked on board their seven brigantines. The largest, named the Capitana, was commanded by Luis de Moscoso, as admiral of this little fleet. Of that numerous and brilliant host which had entered upon this heroic but disastrous expedition

* The Portuguese historian makes the number of Indians thus embarked amount to one hundred. The number given by the Inca is more probable, both narratives having previously stated that the greater part of those Indians who had followed the army in its last march perished before arriving at Aminoya.

for the conquest of Florida, not quite three hundred and fifty survived; and these were in a most wretched plight: their once brilliant armour was battered, broken, and rusted; their rich raiment reduced to rags, or replaced by skins of wild beasts.

The sun was setting as they got under weigh, and the gloom of evening seemed an emblem of their darkening fortunes. They were abandoning the fruit of all their labours and hardships,—the expected reward of their daring exploits,—the land of their golden dreams. They had launched on a vast and unknown river, leading they knew not whither, and were to traverse, in frail and rudely constructed barks, without chart or compass, great wastes of ocean, to which they were strangers, bordered by savage coasts, in the vague hope of reaching some Christian shore, on which they would land beggars!

With sail and oar they pursued their course all night, and on the following morning passed the residence of Guachoya. Here they found many inhabitants waiting in canoes to receive them, and beheld a rustic bower of branches prepared for their reception. The Governor, however, excused himself from landing, upon which the Indians accompanied him in their canoes to where the river diverged into two branches. Then warning him that he was near the residence of Quigualtanqui, they offered to accompany him, and make war upon that Cacique; but Moscoso, who desired nothing less than any hostile encounter with the natives, declined their offer and dismissed them.

This little fleet continued its course by the main branch of the river in which there was a rapid current; and in the afternoon hauled to shore on the left bank, where the Spaniards passed the remainder of the day in a spacious wood. At night they again embarked, and continued their course. Next morning they landed near a village which had been abandoned, and took a woman prisoner, who informed them that the Cacique of Quigualtanqui had assembled all his forces further down the river, and was waiting to attack them.

This intelligence put them upon their guard, but made them ready to suspect hostilities, which perhaps were not intended. They had not proceeded much further down the stream, when, as they were foraging on shore, and supplying themselves with provisions, they perceived a number of

canoes hovering on the opposite side, and, as they thought, menacing hostilities. The cross-bowmen immediately leaped into the canoes that were astern of the brigantines, pushed across, and readily dispersed the savages.

No sooner, however, had the cross-bowmen returned to their brigantines, and the latter got under weigh, than the light barks of their enemies were again in sight. Keeping a-head of the squadron, and drawing up near a village that stood on a high bank, they seemed disposed to make battle. The canoes were again manned, the Indians once more dispersed, and the Spaniards landing, fired their village; after which, they encamped for the night in an open plain.

Whatever may have been the previous disposition and intentions of the Indians, they had now fair grounds for hostility; nor did they fail to exercise it to the utmost. On the following morning a powerful fleet of canoes was in sight, apparently the combined force of the hostile Caciques. Some of them were of great size, with from fourteen to twenty-five paddles on each side, and carrying from thirty to seventy warriors. They darted across the water with the swiftness of racehorses.

Some of the principal warriors were brilliantly painted; so likewise were their canoes, both within and without. The paddles and rowers, even the warriors themselves, from the feet to the scalping-tuft, were severally painted of one colour. Some were blue, others yellow or white, green, violet, or black, according to the device or taste of the chieftain.

For that day and part of the next they followed the Spaniards without attacking them, keeping time in rowing by chanting wild songs of different cadences, short or long, slow or fast, according to the speed with which they desired to move; closing each chant with a deafening yell, and shouting the name of Quigualtanqui. The burthen of these war songs, was the chivalrous exploits of their ancestors, and the daring deeds of their chieftain, by recalling the memory of which they roused themselves to battle. Proudly boasting of their own valour, at the same time taunting the Spaniards with cowardice in flying from their arms, they threatened to overthrow them, and make them food for fishes.

The second day at noon there was a movement among the fleet of canoes. Separating into three different divisions, and forming a van, centre, and rear, they approached the

right bank of the river. The canoes in the van darted forward, gliding along to the right of the brigantines, and crossing the river obliquely, discharged a shower of arrows, which wounded many Spaniards, in spite of their shields and bulwarks. They then wheeled round, and recrossing the stream in front of the brigantines, stationed themselves on the right bank. The second squadron, composing the centre of the fleet, performed the same manœuvre, and having discharged their arrows, returned and stationed themselves in front of the van. The rear did likewise, and then took up their position in front of all.

As the caravels advanced, the Indians repeated their attack, always returning to the right bank of the river. In this manner the savages fought with the Spaniards all day, never giving them a moment's rest, and interrupting their repose during the night by incessant alarms.

When the Spaniards were first attacked, they manned the canoes in which they had secured their horses, for the purpose of protecting them, as they expected to fight hand to hand with the savages. Perceiving, however, the enemy's intention to keep at a distance, and gall them with their arrows, and finding themselves exposed to these formidable missiles, they returned to the brigantines, leaving the horses with no other defence than the skins of animals, which they had thrown over them.

In these contests the Spaniards had recourse only to their cross-bows, for their arquebusses had never been of use since the destruction of their gunpowder, at the conflagration of Mauvila, and they had been wrought with other articles into iron-work for the brigantines. They acted, however, only on the defensive, endeavouring merely to keep the enemy at bay, while the rowers plied their oars; sheltering themselves as well as they were able with buffalo skins, and shields made of double mats, through which an arrow could not penetrate.

This harassing warfare continued for several days and nights, until most of the Spaniards were wounded, and all were worn out with fatigue and watching, and the weight of their armour. Of the horses, only eight remained alive. The savages at length desisted from their attacks, and hovered at a distance.

Moscoso imagining they had given over all further hostili-

ties, and supposing that the sea could not not be far off, was desirous of procuring a fresh supply of provisions. Observing a small village on the banks of the river, he sent Gonzalo Silvestre on shore with a hundred men and the eight horses, to seek supplies. The inhabitants fled with loud yells at the approach of such strange people and animals. Silvestre found abundance of maize and dried fruits, with various skins, and among the rest a martin skin, decorated with strings of pearls, which appeared to have been used as a banner. While he and his party were taking possession of everything in their way, they heard the trumpet sounding their recall. Hurrying to the river bank, they beheld a fleet of canoes pulling towards them with all speed, while a band of Indians were running to cut them off by land. Springing into their canoes, they pulled with desperate exertions to the brigantines, abandoning the horses to their fate. The savages turned to vent their fury upon the latter. The gallant creatures defended themselves by kicking and plunging, and some of the Indians were so frightened at what they took for ferocious monsters that they leaped into the water; the rest, however, hunted the poor horses like so many deer, transfixed them with their arrows, and finally destroyed them.

Thus miserably perished the remnant of the three hundred and fifty noble steeds which had entered Florida in such gorgeous array. As the Spaniards beheld these faithful animals slaughtered before their eyes, without being able to aid them, they shed tears, as though the horses had been their own children.*

CHAPTER LXVI.

1543. THE Indians continued to follow at some distance in the rear of the Spaniards, attacking any of their vessels that lagged behind, until the sixteenth day of their harassing voyage.

On board one of the brigantines was a soldier named Estevan Añez. He was of low birth, but had joined the expedition as a trooper. His steed, though of sorry appearance, being tough and strong, was among the last that perished. Owing to his being mounted, Añez had been engaged in

* Garcilaso de la Vega, l. 6. c. 5. Portuguese Relation, c. 38.

some of the most perilous services of the expedition, and though he had never performed any thing of note, had gained the reputation of a gallant man, which, added to his natural rusticity and narrow spirit, had rendered him weak and vain-glorious. This day he got into a canoe, attached to the stern of the brigantine, under pretence of speaking with Moscoso, but in reality on a hair-brained project. He induced to join him five young cavaliers of buoyant spirits and daring valour, promising them some brilliant exploit. One of them, Carlos Enriquez, scarcely twenty years of age, graceful in form, and with a countenance of extreme beauty, was the natural son of Don Carlos Enriquez, who fell bravely fighting in the battle of Mauvila.

Estevan Añez, with these five gallant youths, pulled directly for the Indian fleet that stretched across the river in the rear. The Governor, witnessing this mad freak, ordered the trumpets to sound a recall. The captains of the brigantines likewise shouted and made signs for them to return. The louder they shouted, the more obstinate and vain-glorious Estevan Añez became, and instead of returning, he made signs for the brigantines to follow him. When Luis de Moscoso beheld the stubbornness of this madman, he despatched forty-six Spaniards after him in three canoes, vowing to hang him the moment he should be brought back. Juan de Guzman, the commander of one of the brigantines, was the first to leap into a canoe, followed by his friend Juan de Vargas. Guzman prided himself upon his skill in managing a canoe, and resisted the entreaties of his friends that he would remain in the brigantine.

The savages perceiving the Spaniards' approach, made a retrograde movement for the purpose of leading them away from the brigantines, which, having furled their sails, were pulling slowly against the current to support them. Estevan Añez, however, being blinded by his vanity, instead of mistrusting the enemy's designs, was deceived by this stratagem, and pulled with redoubled might towards them, crying, "They fly! they fly! at them! at them!" The other three canoes increased their efforts, likewise hoping either to detain him or give him succour.

The Indians having allowed their foes to draw nigh, altered the disposition of their forces, the centre retreating, so as to form a half moon, and thus luring the Christians into

ties, and supposing that the sea could not not be far off, was desirous of procuring a fresh supply of provisions. Observing a small village on the banks of the river, he sent Gonzalo Silvestre on shore with a hundred men and the eight horses, to seek supplies. The inhabitants fled with loud yells at the approach of such strange people and animals. Silvestre found abundance of maize and dried fruits, with various skins, and among the rest a martin skin, decorated with strings of pearls, which appeared to have been used as a banner. While he and his party were taking possession of everything in their way, they heard the trumpet sounding their recall. Hurrying to the river bank, they beheld a fleet of canoes pulling towards them with all speed, while a band of Indians were running to cut them off by land. Springing into their canoes, they pulled with desperate exertions to the brigantines, abandoning the horses to their fate. The savages turned to vent their fury upon the latter. The gallant creatures defended themselves by kicking and plunging, and some of the Indians were so frightened at what they took for ferocious monsters that they leaped into the water; the rest, however, hunted the poor horses like so many deer, transfixed them with their arrows, and finally destroyed them.

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The Indians having allowed their foes to draw nigh, altered the disposition of their forces, the centre retreating, so as to form a half moon, and thus luring the Christians into

the midst of them. They then assailed them furiously in front and flank. Some leaped into the water and overturned the canoes of the Spaniards, many of whom were carried down by the weight of their armour and drowned. Some who kept themselves up by swimming were shot with arrows, or struck over the head with paddles, and others who clung to the overturned canoes were beaten off. In this manner, without being able to make the least defence, forty-eight Spaniards miserably perished. Four alone escaped. One was Pedro Moron, the half-breed, who was an expert swimmer, and exceedingly skilful in the management of a canoe; he had fallen into the river, but with great dexterity and strength, recovered his bark and made his escape, bearing off with him three other soldiers. One of them, named Alvaro Nieto, fought alone, and kept the savages at bay, whilst Pedro Moron guided the canoe; but neither the prowess and valour of the one, nor the dexterity and skill of the other would have availed, had not the brigantine of Juan de Guzman fortunately been near. This bark was in advance of the rest, the crew having made greater exertion, aware that their much-loved leader was in the midst of the affray; thus they rescued four of their comrades. Another Spaniard, Juan Terron, reached the brigantine, but as his companions were raising him out of the water, he breathed his last in their arms, being pierced with more than fifty arrows. The survivors asserted, that they had seen the gallant De Guzman borne off by the Indians in one of their canoes, but whether dead or alive, they could not tell.

Luis de Moscoso once again arranged his fleet in order, and resumed his eventful voyage, deeply lamenting the loss of these generous and valiant cavaliers.

This was the last assault of the savages, who seemed satisfied with this signal blow. All the rest of the day, and during the succeeding night, they kept up continual shouts of triumph. When the sun rose on the following morning they appeared to worship him and to return thanks for their victory, then raising a deafening din of voices, mingled with the sound of trumpets, shells, and drums, they turned their prows up the river and departed for their homes.

CHAPTER LXVII.

1543. THE harassed Spaniards began once more to breathe freely, when they saw their cruel enemies depart. They now reflected seriously upon their position. The river had expanded until it was several leagues in breadth; thus, when in the midst, they could not descry land on either side. The departure of the Indians led them to conjecture that the sea was near at hand. Keeping the centre of the current, therefore, lest they should wander into some deep bay, they continued onward, with sail and oar and favouring breeze, until, on the twentieth day, a broad expanse of water opened before them. On their left lay a large island, formed by vast quantities of drift-wood swept down the river, and piled up by the repercussion of the waters from the sea. About a league further was an uninhabited island, such as is often found at the mouths of great rivers, formed by alluvial deposits. The Spaniards were convinced by these signs that they had reached the mouth of the Mississippi, and that the boundless ocean lay before them.

They now steered for the island of drift-wood, and found a secure harbour for their brigantines; for they could lay them beside the floating masses of timber, which rose and fell with the tide, and, fastening them to trunks of large trees imbedded there, leave them as secure as if at a pier head. Here they landed and overhauled their vessels, to repair any damage they might have sustained, and fit them for the buffeting of the ocean, killed the few hogs that yet remained alive, and converted them into bacon. These labours, however, required but little time; the great object in landing was repose. So exhausted were they from the constant watchfulness they had been obliged to maintain for three weeks past, that during two days they did little else than sleep; and that so profoundly, that they lay about like so many dead bodies.

About noon on the third day, they were roused from their repose by the appearance of enemies. Seven canoes issued from among reeds and rushes, and approaching within hail, a gigantic Indian, black as an Ethiopian, either from paint or natural complexion, stood up in the prow of the foremost, and addressed them in a thundering voice. After a brief

harangue, accompanied by menacing looks and gestures, he turned his prow, and followed by his companions, shot back again among the rushes, where from time to time other canoes were perceived gliding about as if in ambush.

The words of this black warrior being explained, for they were partially understood by the Indian domestics, they proved to be insulting epithets, and threats of hostility. Moscoso, fearing his enemies might put their threats into execution, and attempt to surprise him in the night, and burn his vessels, determined to be beforehand with them, and strike the first blow. He accordingly detached, in five canoes, a party of picked men, to beat up the cane-brake. Among these were twenty-two cross-bowmen and three archers. One of the archers was an Englishman by birth; another had lived in England from his boyhood until his twenty-eighth year, and had acquired there his skill with the long-bow and the cloth-yard arrow, for which the English were renowned. Throughout the expedition these two archers had used no other weapon, and had been noted for their deadly aim. The third archer was an Indian, servant of the gallant Juan de Guzman, who had fallen in the late battle, whom he had served faithfully on all occasions since his master's first landing in Florida.

This detachment was commanded by Gonzalo Silvestre and Alvaro Nieto. They discovered the enemy's canoes drawn up in battle array among the rushes, in formidable numbers. The savages waiting until their foes were within bow-shot, and, having discharged a cloud of arrows that wounded several soldiers, swept in among the rushes, and came to a second stand. In this way they shot and wheeled about, and came again to the charge like so many horsemen. The cross-bowmen and the three archers kept up a well-directed discharge, and galled the Indians excessively; at length the Spaniards were able to come to close quarters, overturned three of the canoes of the enemy, killed several of the crew, and put the whole armament to flight. They, however, came out of this affray vey roughly handled; most of them being wounded, and among the number their two commanders.

Fearing an attack in the night, and that fire might be set to the vessels, Moscoso embarked all his forces and made sail for the uninhabited island, under the lea of which he

anchored, in forty fathoms water. All that night the Spaniards slept on their arms, on board their vessels, ready for action: the enemy, however, offered no further molestation.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

1543. WHEN day dawned, the Governor called a council of his officers to determine what course they should steer. To attempt crossing to Cuba or Hispaniola was considered entirely out of the question, as they knew not where to seek these ports, nor were they provided with nautical instruments necessary for such a voyage: it was determined, therefore, to make for the coast of Mexico, or New Spain; in steering towards which, they would have the land always on their right, whither they might resort as occasion should require.

Juan de Añasco now stood forward with his usual bustling zeal, whenever any important measure was to be adopted. He piqued himself much upon his knowledge of maritime affairs, as he did upon various other kinds of knowledge, and declared that, according to maps which he had seen, from the place where he supposed they then were, the coast bore east and west to the river of Palms, and from that river to New Spain ran north and south, making a considerable curvature. He advised, therefore, that they should put out to sea in a south-west direction, so as to steer across the gulf; by this route they might reach the Mexican shores in ten or twelve days, whereas, if they kept near the land, and followed the windings of the coast, the voyage would necessarily be prolonged, and they might be overtaken by winter before they could arrive at a Christian country. To illustrate his ideas, he drew upon a piece of parchment, made from a deer's skin, a rough chart, according to his notions of the coast; he also produced an old astrolabe, which, being of metal, had escaped the conflagration at Mauvila, and which he had preserved with curious care; likewise a forestaff, which he had made from a carpenter's rule. With these to take observations and to steer by, he offered to pilot the squadron across the gulf to the shores of New Spain.

The Governor was at first inclined to adopt this council, especially as it was concurred in by some of the officers.

harangue, accompanied by menacing looks and gestures, he turned his prow, and followed by his companions, shot back again among the rushes, where from time to time other canoes were perceived gliding about as if in ambush.

The words of this black warrior being explained, for they were partially understood by the Indian domestics, they proved to be insulting epithets, and threats of hostility. Moscoso, fearing his enemies might put their threats into execution, and attempt to surprise him in the night, and burn his vessels, determined to be beforehand with them, and strike the first blow. He accordingly detached, in five canoes, a party of picked men, to beat up the cane-brake. Among these were twenty-two cross-bowmen and three archers. One of the archers was an Englishman by birth; another had lived in England from his boyhood until his twenty-eighth year, and had acquired there his skill with the long-bow and the cloth-yard arrow, for which the English were renowned. Throughout the expedition these two archers had used no other weapon, and had been noted for their deadly aim. The third archer was an Indian, servant of the gallant Juan de Guzman, who had fallen in the late battle, whom he had served faithfully on all occasions since his master's first landing in Florida.

This detachment was commanded by Gonzalo Silvestre and Alvaro Nieto. They discovered the enemy's canoes drawn up in battle array among the rushes, in formidable numbers. The savages waiting until their foes were within bow-shot, and, having discharged a cloud of arrows that wounded several soldiers, swept in among the rushes, and came to a second stand. In this way they shot and wheeled about, and came again to the charge like so many horsemen. The cross-bowmen and the three archers kept up a well-directed discharge, and galled the Indians excessively; at length the Spaniards were able to come to close quarters, overturned three of the canoes of the enemy, killed several of the crew, and put the whole armament to flight. They, however, came out of this affray very roughly handled; most of them being wounded, and among the number their two commanders.

Fearing an attack in the night, and that fire might be set to the vessels, Moscoso embarked all his forces and made sail for the uninhabited island, under the lea of which he

anchored, in forty fathoms water. All that night the Spaniards slept on their arms, on board their vessels, ready for action: the enemy, however, offered no further molestation.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

1543. WHEN day dawned, the Governor called a council of his officers to determine what course they should steer. To attempt crossing to Cuba or Hispaniola was considered entirely out of the question, as they knew not where to seek these ports, nor were they provided with nautical instruments necessary for such a voyage: it was determined, therefore, to make for the coast of Mexico, or New Spain; in steering towards which, they would have the land always on their right, whither they might resort as occasion should require.

Juan de Añasco now stood forward with his usual bustling zeal, whenever any important measure was to be adopted. He piqued himself much upon his knowledge of maritime affairs, as he did upon various other kinds of knowledge, and declared that, according to maps which he had seen, from the place where he supposed they then were, the coast bore east and west to the river of Palms, and from that river to New Spain ran north and south, making a considerable curvature. He advised, therefore, that they should put out to sea in a south-west direction, so as to steer across the gulf; by this route they might reach the Mexican shores in ten or twelve days, whereas, if they kept near the land, and followed the windings of the coast, the voyage would necessarily be prolonged, and they might be overtaken by winter before they could arrive at a Christian country. To illustrate his ideas, he drew upon a piece of parchment, made from a deer's skin, a rough chart, according to his notions of the coast; he also produced an old astrolabe, which, being of metal, had escaped the conflagration at Mauvila, and which he had preserved with curious care; likewise a forestaff, which he had made from a carpenter's rule. With these to take observations and to steer by, he offered to pilot the squadron across the gulf to the shores of New Spain.

The Governor was at first inclined to adopt this council, especially as it was concurred in by some of the officers.

The majority, however, opposed it; partly through doubts of the nautical knowledge of Juan de Añasco, who they knew had but little practical experience; partly, perhaps, from jealousy of the lead so often given to him in services of moment, but chiefly because of the real dangers of his proposition. They argued that the brigantines, being so slightly built, and without decks, would be in danger of foundering in the least storm;—that their peril would be almost equally great on the high sea, in calms or head-winds from want of fresh water, having so few casks to put it in, and that it would be the height of rashness to attempt to cross a vast and unknown gulf without a compass to steer by and an experienced pilot to direct them. They concluded, therefore, that though it might be the slower, it would be the far surer course to keep along the coast, where they could land occasionally for supplies, and take refuge in creeks, bays, and mouths of rivers, in case of tempestuous weather. This council finally prevailed, much to the vexation of Juan de Añasco.

Orders were now given to make sail, when, as they were weighing anchor, the cable of the Governor's brigantine parted. Unfortunately, there was no buoy to mark the place, and the water was extremely deep. For six hours the most expert divers were employed to search for it, but in vain; they therefore supplied its place with a heavy stone, and bits from the troopers' bridles to increase its weight.

It was not until three o'clock in the afternoon that they made sail. The Governor and Añasco took the lead. They kept on for two or three leagues into the broad sea, when the captains of the other vessels bore up, and hailing Moscoso, demanded whether he intended to quit the shore, contrary to the resolution of the council, declaring that if he did they would abandon him, and take each his own course.

Moscoso replied that he stood to sea for the purpose of sailing with more security during the night, but that he should return to the coast in the daytime. All that night and the next day this little fleet kept on with a fair wind, and to their surprise, in fresh water, owing to the immense quantity disembogued by the Mississippi. About nightfall, they anchored at a small rocky island, to take a little repose.

Here Juan de Añasco again produced his deer-skin chart, and inveighed against the loss of time and labour in thus creeping pusillanimously along shore, instead of standing

boldly across the gulf. His arguments at length prevailed, and, on the following morning, all the vessels stood out to sea. For two days Juan de Añasco piloted them triumphantly, with the aid of his astrolabe and forestaff, and frequent consultations of the deer-skin chart. At length, their water growing scanty, they felt inclined to stand toward the shore, but were met in the teeth by a contrary wind.

This wind continued two days, and kept them beating about on the high seas till their water was nearly expended. They now bitterly inveighed against Juan de Añasco for giving his advice, and the Governor for following it, and swore that if they once more got in with the land they would keep along shore, let Moscoso and his nautical counsellor take what course they pleased. On the fourth day, when they were at their last drop of water, the wind veered a little, and, plying every oar, they made for the coast. Those on board the vessels, who knew any thing of nautical matters, now vented their spleen upon Juan de Añasco as a meddling pretender, who had never been at sea before this expedition, and knew nothing of maritime affairs. The common soldiers made merry at the expense of his astrolabe and deer-skin chart. This coming to Añasco's ears, he flung his forestaff into the sea, with the chart tied to it, and would have sent the astrolabe after them, but prudence tempered his wrath. Fortunately, the forestaff and chart floated, and were picked up by the brigantines which followed, and Juan de Añasco was gradually pacified. He seems, in fact, to have been the only person in the squadron who had a just notion of their situation and true course, and his idea of the run of the coast was in the main correct.

CHAPTER LXIX.

1543. IT was with much toil and difficulty that the Spaniards rowed to shore, where they landed on a sandy beach without shelter. In the evening the wind blew fresh from the south, and drove the vessels from their weak anchors, so that they were in danger of stranding. The crews were obliged to leap into the water, and bear up against them to keep them from bilging. When the wind had subsided, they dug pits in the sand, from which they procured fresh water enough

to fill their casks. In this way they supplied themselves with water throughout the voyage, whenever there were no springs or streams at hand. After sailing about fifteen days, they came to four or five small islands, not far from the main land. Here they found innumerable quantities of sea-birds, which built their nests upon the sand, and so close together, that it was almost impossible to walk without treading upon them. The men landed and returned to the vessels, laden with eggs and young birds, which were almost too fat to eat. Quitting these islands, they coasted along until they came to a beautiful beach, free from rushes, skirted by a grove of large trees, clear of bush, brake, or underwood. Here they found great quantities of that scum of the sea called copeck, resembling pitch. They therefore remained here several days, careening their brigantines on the beach, caulking their seams, and smearing them with the copeck, mixed with hog's lard. While thus employed, they were visited several times by a few natives, armed with bows and arrows, but pacific in their conduct, who brought maize in exchange for skins. Continuing their voyage, the Spaniards were exceedingly molested in some parts of the coast by clouds of mosquitoes, so virulent in their sting that the men's faces were swollen out of all shape. It thus became necessary to stand by the rowers, and drive off these pestilent insects from their heads as they laboured at the oar.

When the weather was pleasant some of the men fished while others went on shore and gathered shell fish, for they were on short allowance, their pork being expended, and they had but little maize remaining. Some of the fish taken were of a very large size, and one jerked with such violence as to pull the unwary fisherman into the water.

For fifty-three days the Spaniards kept along the coast, steering to the westward. A great part of the time, however, was employed in repairing the vessels, in fishing, and in sheltering themselves from rough weather. Juan de Añasco, calculating the distance they had come, insisted that they must be near the river of Palms, from which, as he had before represented, according to his recollections of the map he had seen, the coast bore north and south. The fleet consequently stood a little out to sea, and next morning early they perceived palm trees at a distance rising above the surface of the water, and observed that the coast actually lay

north and south. In the afternoon high mountains began to loom up afar off—the first they had seen on any part of the sea-coast since their first landing at Espiritu Santo. The opinions of Juan de Añasco now rose in the estimation of his companions, and it was concluded that they had passed the river of Palms in the night-time. If so, they could not be above sixty leagues from the river of Panuco, in the neighbourhood of Spanish settlements.

They had not proceeded far, however, when a violent gale sprang up from the north. Five of the brigantines, and among them that of the Governor, made for the land; the other two caravels, one under command of the treasurer, Juan Gaytan, who since the untimely death of De Guzman had been sole captain, and the other, commanded by Juan Alvorado and Christoval Mosquera, not taking timely warning of the threatening gale stood off too far from the coast, and were consequently exposed all night to its fury. The caravel of Juan Gaytan was at one time in imminent peril. A sudden squall struck her, wrenched her mast out of the beam, and it was with the utmost difficulty they could right it again. When morning dawned, instead of lulling as the mariners had predicted, the gale raged with renewed violence. Observing the other five brigantines enter a creek and anchor in safety, it stimulated the crews of the two caravels to redouble their efforts to reach their companions. All their efforts were however vain, for the wind was directly a-head, and they were several times in danger of foundering in spite of their struggles. They still persisted until the afternoon, when, convinced that further toil would be unavailing, they bore off and ran along the coast with the wind on their quarter, the billows all the while breaking over them, so that they were in continual danger of being swamped.

For six and twenty hours the gale continued with unabated fury, during which time the Spaniards were struggling with the winds and waves without a moment's repose and scarcely tasting food. Just as the sun was going down there was a cry of "land a-head." A boy named Francisco, in the brigantine under the command of Juan de Alvorado and Francisco Mosquera, said to those captains, "Señores, I know this coast, as I have visited it twice before as cabin-boy of a ship; the dark land stretching to the left is a rough and rock-bound shore, extending to the harbour of Vera Cruz.

In all that distance there is neither port nor shelter, but it is studded with sharp-pointed rocks; if we strike upon these we must all perish. The light-coloured land to the right is a soft sand beach, which we can attain before nightfall. Should the wind drive us upon those gloomy shores we have little chance of our lives!"

So soon as the vessels drew near each other, the two captains warned Juan Gaytan and his crew of their danger. The latter immediately determined to shape their course for the white shore, but Juan Gaytan, who was a better treasurer than captain, opposed this measure, saying it was not well thus to lose a valuable bark. This exasperated the crew, who began to mutiny and murmur. "Is this vessel of more worth than our lives?" said they. "You presume upon your rank of royal treasurer. Did you cut wood, or make charcoal for the forges, or beat out iron for the nails, or caulk the vessels, or in fact do any thing? No! you excused yourself as an officer of the Emperor; pray then what do you lose if the brigantine is wrecked?"

Not heeding their commander, the principal soldiers set to work trimming the sails, and a Portuguese, named Domingos de Acosta, seized the helm and turned the prow of the bark towards the desired shore. After making several tacks, they struck upon the beach before the sun had set, and succeeded in unlading and hauling the vessel on dry land. The other brigantine effected a landing in a similar manner, and with like success.

CHAPTER LXX.

1543. THE crews of the two barks now assembled together to decide what should be done. It was unanimously resolved to send messengers to seek the Governor, with tidings of their situation. But who would undertake this perilous journey? They would have to travel thirteen or fourteen leagues through an unknown land, to ford rivers, and peradventure encounter enemies.

Gonzalo Quadrado Xaramillo and Franciso Muñoz undertook the task. Taking a small supply of provisions, and buckling on their shields and swords, they set forth at midnight on their hazardous expedition.

Their comrades then returned to their brigantines, posted sentries, and took a refreshing repose after their arduous labours. The morning had no sooner dawned than they chose three captains to set out, each with twenty men, and explore the country. One party followed the coast to the north, another to the south, and the third, under Gonzalo Sylvestre, took a westwardly direction into the interior.

The two first parties returned in a short time, one bringing half a dish of white porcelain, of Spanish manufacture, the other a broken porringer of painted earthenware. The rapture of their comrades at beholding these signs of the neighbourhood of some Spanish settlement, is easier to be conceived than described.

Gonzalo Sylvestre and his band had penetrated little more than a quarter of a league, when they beheld a beautiful lake of fresh water spread out before them, half a league in extent. Upon its waters were several canoes with Indians fishing. Fearing that these might see them, and spread an alarm, they struck into a wood that bordered the lake, and keeping silently on for a quarter of a league, they saw two Indians beneath a Guava tree, gathering the fruit. Dragging themselves along the ground among the herbage, until sufficiently near, they rose at the same time and rushed to seize the Indians, one of whom plunged into the lake, and escaped by swimming; they took the other prisoner; at the same time making prize of two baskets of Guavas, a Mexican turkey, two Spanish fowls, and some maize;—they then proceeded with all haste towards the vessels.

On arriving at the sea-shore they found their comrades examining those tokens of civilization discovered by the two Captains. When, however, the Spaniards beheld the articles brought by Sylvestre and his party, they leaped about like madmen. A surgeon, who had formerly been in Mexico, asking the Indian captive the name of a pair of scissors, which he held in his hand, the latter immediately called it by its Spanish name. This convinced them that they were in the territory of Mexico, which elated them to such a degree, that they embraced Sylvestre and his men, and hoisting that Captain upon their shoulders, bore him about the shore in triumph.

When this ebullition of joy had subsided, upon inquiring

more particularly respecting the country, they learnt that the river into which Luis de Moscoso, with the five brigantines, had taken refuge, was the Panuco; and that on its banks, twelve leagues above, stood a city of the same name. The Indian told them, moreover, that about a league off lived a Cacique who could read and write, and had been educated by Christian priests.

These joyful tidings gladdened their hearts, and having feasted the Indian, and given him presents, they despatched him to the Christian Cacique, with a request that the latter would either bring or send a supply of ink and paper. Their messenger soon returned, and with him the Cacique, followed by a train of eight Indians, laden with fowls, bread of maize, and various fruits and fish, together with paper and ink. The Spaniards immediately sent off a native with a letter to Moscoso, giving him an account of all that had happened, and requesting directions as to their future movements.

Meanwhile, Moscoso, when he took refuge in the river from the gale, with his five brigantines, to his great joy beheld several Indians on shore, clothed in the Spanish costume. Addressing them in Spanish, he demanded in what country they then were. The Indians answered in the same language, that they were on the Panuco river, and that the town of that name was not fifteen leagues distant. Upon this the Spaniards leaped on shore, kissed the ground repeatedly, and throwing themselves on their knees, poured out their thanks to God.

They now made the best of their way to the town of Panuco, where, in a few days, they were joined by their shipwrecked comrades. On entering the town their first act was to repair to the church, and offer up thanks to God for having preserved them through so many perils and hardships. The burghers crowded to the church to offer them assistance. The Corregidor took Moscoso into his house, made him his guest, and quartered his followers among the inhabitants.

The town was for the most part built of stone, and contained about seventy families, who lived simply but abundantly, the wealthiest not possessing incomes of above five hundred crowns. Many of the inhabitants, however, were courteous cavaliers, and all were touched with pity at be-

holding this forlorn remnant of the gallant armament, which had excited such expectations on its outset from Cuba.

The survivors, in fact, were blackened, haggard, shrivelled, and half naked; being clad only with the skins of deer, buffaloes, bears, and other animals, so that, says the Spanish historian, they looked more like wild beasts than human beings.

CHAPTER LXXI.

1543. THE Chief Magistrate of Panuco despatched a messenger forthwith to Don Antonio de Mendoza, of Mexico, which city lay seventy leagues distant, to apprise him that a small remnant of Hernando de Soto's army had returned from Florida. The Viceroy sent word, without delay, that they should be shown every kindness, and furnished with whatever was necessary for their journey when sufficiently recovered from their fatigues. He accompanied his message with a supply of shirts and sandals, and also four mules laden with delicacies and medicines for the sick.

While Luis de Moscoso and his men continued in this city, they had time to reflect upon the beautiful country they had abandoned, and began to draw comparisons between it and Panuco. They found that here the people were but indifferently circumstanced, having neither mines of gold nor of silver, nor any other treasure. Their dresses were mere garments of cotton; their only sources of wealth the breeding of horses and planting of mulberry-trees. The adventurers now began to retrace in memory the beautiful provinces they had discovered; their wild fertility and prodigal abundance; their capabilities for raising maize, grain, and vegetables; their verdant meadows and rich pastures; their vast tracts of woodland, watered by running streams, so well adapted to the raising of flocks and herds. But, above all, they called to mind the treasures of pearls, which they had not appreciated, as each adventurer fancied himself lord of boundless domains.

Turning over these things in their minds, they began to murmur among themselves. "Could we not," said they, "have dwelt in Florida, as these Spaniards live in Panuco?"

and had we settled there, should we not have been more opulent than our hosts here? Is it just that we should come and receive hospitality from others poorer than ourselves, when we might have entertained all Spain? Is it creditable to our honour that we, who might have been chieftains, have come here to beg? It would have been far better to have bravely perished in the beautiful country we have quitted, amid the struggles of war and the labours of discovery, than to dwell here in inglorious inaction!"

These murmurings in their poverty produced violent discord among the discontented soldiers. Their greatest rage, however, was against the officers of the royal revenue, and those who, after the death of the Governor, Hernando de Soto, had insisted upon quitting Florida, and had obstinately forced Luis de Moscoso to undertake that disastrous journey to the province of Los Vasqueros, instead of sending two brigantines for reinforcements, as had been intended. Several affrays took place in which blood was shed, and some lives lost. The officers and cavaliers were obliged to keep within doors, and the town was continually distracted by broils among the soldiery.

The Corregidor of Panuco, finding that this discord increased from day to day, sent word to the Viceroy, Don Antonio de Mendoza, who ordered Moscoso and his disappointed troops to be sent immediately to Mexico, in small detachments of ten and twenty, and that care should be taken to separate those who were at variance, lest they should fight by the road.

In pursuance of this order, they left Panuco twenty-five days after their arrival there. The inhabitants along the road thronged to see them; eager to behold men who had survived such toils and endured such hardships. The fame of their great sufferings and daring exploits had spread throughout the land, and both Indians and Spaniards entertained them with great kindness during their journey. When they arrived at the renowned city of Mexico, throngs of citizens flocked out to receive them, and conducted them to their homes, where they feasted them and clothed them in sumptuous apparel. The Viceroy treated the Governor and his officers with distinguished attention, and extended his liberality to the humblest of their followers.

Some of the skins and furs which the army had preserved were highly prized in Mexico. A few strings of pearls, also, which they had brought with them, proved to be of immense value. The beautiful martin skins, however, were valued above all. Finding that men of wealth prized so highly what they had despised, their despondency increased; they brooded bitterly over their folly in abandoning a country which had cost them so much to discover, and where such valuable articles abounded. Discontented with themselves, they forgot their former brotherhood in arms, and again broke out into sanguinary brawls.

In order to console them, the Viceroy promised that, if they desired to return to Florida, he would himself undertake the conquest of that country; in fact, he had an inclination for the enterprise, and offered salaries to many of the officers and men, if they would accompany him. Some accepted his proposals, but most of them, when put to the proof, shrank from returning to a country where they had suffered so many hardships.

The enterprising spirit of Juan de Añasco was somewhat broken by disappointment, and, disgusted with the new world, where he had squandered his fortune, he returned to Spain. Juan Gaytan, the treasurer, Baltazar de Gallegos, Pedro Calderon, Alonso Romo de Cardeños, Arias Tinoco, and many others of less note, followed the example of De Añasco. Gomez Suarez de Figuero returned to the estate of his father. Some embraced the priesthood; a few remained in New Spain, among whom was the Governor, Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado, who married a relative, a woman of rank and wealth in Mexico. The greatest number, however, went to seek their fortunes in Peru.

CHAPTER LXXII.

1543. To close this eventful history, it only remains to give some account of the movements of Diego Maldonado and Gomez Arias. The former, as we have before related, set sail from Espiritu Santo for the Havana, with two brigantines, to visit Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, wife of Hernando de Soto; Gomez Arias having preceded him in a caravel.

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These two cavaliers had received orders to procure vessels in Havana, load them with supplies of food, arms, and stores, and sail for the Port of Achusi in the course of the following autumn, where De Soto, after exploring the interior of Florida, was to meet them.

They accordingly joined each other in the Havanna, and, having sent to all the adjacent islands an account of the discovery of Florida, purchased three vessels and freighted them with supplies, together with the two brigantines and, the caravel. They could have laden two additional vessels; for the inhabitants of the islands, hearing such a favourable report of Florida, and prompted by their own interest as well as by their love for De Soto, sent all the provision they could collect.

The two captains set sail and reached the Port of Achusi in safety, but not finding De Soto there they separated and coasted in opposite directions, thinking it probable that he might have come out at some other place, either to the eastward or westward. They left signals in the trees and cut letters in the bark, with statements of their intended movements the following summer, but after cruising about in vain until the winter set in, they returned dejected to the Havana. The following summer they revisited the shores of Florida, running along the coast as far to the westward as Mexico, and a great distance to the eastward, but meeting with no success, they returned to the Havana on approach of winter. Early the ensuing summer they again sailed for Florida, and after having consumed seven months in fruitless search, were compelled by the weather to return and winter in the harbour of Cuba.

Determined, however, not to give up the search until they had discovered traces of De Soto, for they could not believe that every soul of the expedition had perished; as soon as the spring of 1543 opened, they again put to sea. They cruised about all this summer, suffering grievous privations and undergoing excessive labour, and about the middle of October arrived at Vera Cruz. Here they heard the melancholy account that the Spaniards had abandoned Florida, that only three hundred of the gallant army had escaped, and that the Governor, Hernando de Soto, had perished in the country he sought to conquer. With these sad tidings,

the two captains repaired to Havana, and communicated them to Doña Isabel de Bobadilla. During three long years she had been racked with anxiety for her husband's safety, and now came news of the failure of his magnificent enterprise, the loss of his treasures, the ruin of his estate, the downfall of his house, and his own melancholy death. It was an overwhelming blow; Doña Isabel never held up her head from this time, but died soon after of a broken heart.

Thus closes this history of blasted hope and baffled enterprise.

APPENDIX.

As the principal authority in the foregoing work is Garcilaso de la Vega, a few particulars concerning him and his writings may be acceptable to the reader. He was a Peruvian by birth, a native of the city of Cuzco. His father was a Spanish adventurer of noble descent, and his mother the sister of Huayna Capac, the last of the renowned Incas. Hearing much in his youth of the land of his father, he quitted his country and repaired to Spain, where he took up his residence at Cordova, and soon distinguished himself by his translation of the Dialogues of Love of Leon Hebreos, and by his Royal Commentaries on the History of the Incas. These won him the favour of the Sovereigns and the esteem of the learned. Don Gabriel Deza de Cardenas, in his preface to the second edition of Garcilaso's History of Florida, remarks, that he was admired by the world as a man of piety, virtue, modesty, and devotion to letters, and held in the highest estimation as a historian. He died in Cordova in 1616, and was honourably interred, in the cathedral in one of the chapels called the Chapel of Garcilaso, where monumental inscriptions on each side of the altar record his valour, his virtues, and his literary merits.

Such is the general character of Garcilaso de la Vega; which will enable the reader in some measure to judge of his credibility as a historian. In his introduction to his work on Florida he gives an account of the sources whence he drew his facts. He says, that he had frequently, and in divers places, held long conversations with an old friend who had been present in the expedition of Hernando de Soto, and that, struck with the achievements both of Spaniards and Indians related by this chevalier, he determined to rescue such heroic deeds from oblivion by recording them. His laudable resolve was for a time, however, postponed. He was called to lay down the pen and take up the sword: other causes concurred to separate them, and thus twenty years elapsed before he could carry his plan into execution.

The desire, however, of perpetuating this heroic expedi-

tion, and the names of the brave men engaged in it, increased with his years, and fearing that the death either of his friend or of himself might defeat his wishes, he left his home and took up his residence for a time in the village where the cavalier resided. Here he took down the particulars of the expedition, as related by word of mouth, questioning his friend minutely and repeatedly as to persons, places, and transactions; thus stimulating his memory, and drawing piecemeal from him those anecdotes of individual prowess and adventure, which give such stirring interest and vivacity to his narrative.

Garcilaso does not give the name of his friend, but says, he was a brave soldier, who had been present in all the scenes of the expedition, and had many times acted as leader in the exploits related. He adds that he was of noble rank, an hidalgo, and as such piqued himself on uttering nothing but the truth. Such confidence was placed in his veracity that the Council Royal of the Indies frequently sent for him to consult him about the events that chanced in this and other expeditions in which he had been engaged.

Besides the oral testimony of this cavalier, the Inca informs us that he had likewise written documents from two soldiers who were engaged in the expedition. One of them, named Alonzo de Carmona, a native of the town of Priego, having returned to Spain, wrote his "Two Peregrinations," as he called them, in Florida and Peru. They contained brief notices of facts and circumstances, skipping from one remarkable transaction to another, without much regard to dates or places, or the regular succession of events. These memoirs he sent to Garcilaso de la Vega for his inspection, not knowing at the time that he was occupied on the same subject.

The other soldier was Juan Coles, a native of Zafra; who also wrote an irregular and brief notice of the principal events of the expedition. This he gave to a Franciscan monk, named Fray Pedro Aguado, who incorporated it in a collection of narratives relative to the new world, which he intended to publish. The manuscripts of the friar, however, remained in a crude and neglected state in the hands of a printer at Cordova, where the Inca found them covered with dust and half destroyed by rats. There was nearly a ream of paper, divided into quires, in the hand-writing of the different narrators. From among these Garcilaso extracted the

manuscript of Juan Coles, shortly after he had received that of Alonzo de Carmona. At the time these documents fell into his hands he had already completed his narrative as taken from the lips of his friend; but having now two additional eye-witnesses, he went over the whole subject anew, availing himself of the particulars thus unexpectedly furnished, to corroborate, strengthen, and enlarge the details already recorded.

Such are the sources from whence Garcilaso de la Vega derived his facts, and for which we have the guarantee of his general character as a man of judgment and veracity. His account of the expedition of Hernando de Soto was held in such credit in former times, and by those most capable of judging, that it was incorporated almost at full length by Herrera, the great Spanish historian, in his history of American discovery.

ROUTE OF HERNANDO DE SOTO.

IN order to assist any future research as to the route of Hernando de Soto and his followers, we here subjoin the various marchings, distances, and points of the compass, as gleaned from different parts of the Spanish and Portuguese narratives. They will be seen to be contradictory and exaggerated, and have frequently caused us great perplexity: we have, however, endeavoured to guide ourselves through the maze they present, by certain general landmarks, and by the researches of various travellers.

Indeed, the Inca himself remarks, "I cannot hold myself responsible for the distances I give, for although I have spared no exertion, and have used all diligence to arrive at the truth, yet I have been unavoidably compelled to leave much to conjecture. The Spaniards had no instruments with them by which they could compute distances; their main object was to conquer the country, and seek for silver and gold, consequently they gave themselves but little trouble to note down the route."

"De Soto and his followers," says the Inca, "landed at the Bay of Espiritu Santo, whence they marched a little more than two leagues in a north-east direction, and halted at the village of Hirrihigua; resuming their march to the

north-east, a journey of twenty-five leagues brought them to the village of Urribarracaxi; hence to the province of Acuera, where they next arrived, was twenty leagues. Departing from Acuera, and marching towards the north, and sometimes to the north-east, about twenty leagues, they came to the town of Ocali. Here they crossed the river Ocali, and journeying sixteen leagues, reached Ochile, a frontier village of the province of Vitachuco. The Spaniards," says the Inca, "marched more than fifty leagues through this province. We next find them in the village of Vitachuco. Setting out from thence, they marched four leagues to the river of Osachile. Crossing this, they continued on six leagues, and came to the village of the same name. Twelve leagues further, they found the great swamp; traversing this, which was one league and a half across, they continued on six leagues, and were arrested by a deep stream:—having crossed this, they marched four leagues to the chief village of Apalachee, where they went into winter quarters." The Inca here states that the bay of Aute was about four leagues distant.

Leaving Apalachee, the ensuing spring, they marched to the northward five days, and came to the province of Atapaha; ten days more brought them to the province of Achalaque.* They were five days in traversing this province, and in four days more, came to the frontier village of the province of Cofa. Leaving this village, in six or seven days they came to the province of Cofaqui; from thence, a march of seven days brought them to a river: marching up this for twelve leagues, they came to a frontier village of the province of Cofachiqui; in four days more they arrived at the capital. Quitting this province, they came, at the end of eight days, to the province of Chalaque. Three days more brought them to the province of Xuala. The Inca here observes, that the Spaniards were fifty-seven days marching from Apalachee to Xuala. He supposes, that they must have marched about four leagues and half a day, and that consequently Xuala must have been nearly two hundred and fifty leagues from the province of Apalachee, and about four hundred from the Bay of Espiritu Santo.

* It will be seen, by referring to chap. xxvi of this work, that we consider the Inca under a mistake in bringing them so soon to this province. We prefer the Portuguese account, which makes their arrival a month later.

They now struck, he says, in a westwardly direction, making a bend towards the south, and in five days came to the province of Guaxule: a march of six days more, or thirty leagues, brought them to Ychiaha. Their next journey was to the village of Acoste, five leagues from Ychiaha. Quitting this, they traversed the provinces of Cosa, and in twenty-three or four days came to the village of Cosa, which was more than a hundred leagues distant from Acoste. Continuing onward towards the south, five days' march brought them to the town of Talise; a journey of five or six days more found them in Tascaluza, and marching two leagues further, they halted in the town of Mauvila. From hence, De Soto, to avoid the sea, struck northwardly, and, marching seven days, came to the village of Chicaza: a league distant from this village was Chicacilla, where they passed the winter.

Setting out the following spring, the first place they arrived at was Alibamo, four or five leagues from Chicacilla: a march of three days brought them to the village of Chisca, on the banks of the Mississippi. Following the banks of this river four days, they crossed it, and, marching on four or five days longer, they came to the village of Casquin: a journey of about six days brought them to Capaha; from hence the army returned to the village of Casquin. Leaving that town behind them, they continued along the river nine days, when they reached the village of Quiguate. Still following the course of the river, in five days, they came to Colima. The next province they reached was Tula, ten days' journey from the last: a march of six days more brought them to the town of Utiangue, where they wintered.

In the spring the army resumed its wanderings, and, in seven days came to the village of Naguatex. A march of five days brought them to the frontiers of the province of Guancane, which they were eight days in traversing. From hence they struck in a south-eastwardly direction, to reach the Mississippi. They traversed seven provinces, a distance, the Inca conjectures, of about one hundred and twenty leagues, and arrived at the province of Anilco. Marching on through this province for thirty leagues, they came to the capital: a journey of four days further, brought them to the province of Guachoya, where De Soto died.

The army, says Garcilaso, set out for the westward under

Luis de Moscoso, and marching more than a hundred leagues came to the province of Auché: continuing on for six or seven days, they arrived at the province of Los Vasqueros. They penetrated more than thirty leagues into this province, when their westward march was arrested by the sight of lofty mountains. From hence they set out on their return to the Mississippi, and making a bend to the southward, arrived at the village of Aminoya, three months from the time of their departure from Guachoya. The whole distance of their march to the west of the Mississippi, going and returning, he computes to have been more than three hundred and fifty leagues.

Garcilaso de la Vega remarks, that it is difficult to give precisely the length of the Spaniards' voyage down the Mississippi, as they were so engaged in fighting that they had not time to calculate the probable distance; but he adds, that some time afterwards, in Mexico, they consulted among themselves, in the presence of some men who were skilled in maritime matters, and it was computed that having had the aid of sails and oars, the average of a day and night must have been about five and twenty leagues; and as they were nineteen days and nights in performing the voyage, the whole distance was not far short of five hundred leagues. According to the memorandum of Juan Coles, he says it was considered seven hundred leagues.

Garcilaso adds, that the Mississippi, at Aminoya was nineteen fathoms deep and a quarter of a league wide; but that some persons, who pretended to a knowledge of cosmography, asserted the distance from this place where the Spaniards embarked, to where the river takes its rise, was three hundred leagues, and some averred much more; but I adopt, says he, the opinion most within bounds, that would make this river eight hundred leagues in extent,—which was the distance the Spaniards penetrated into the country. Having given a sketch of the route, as stated by the Inca in his narrative, we annex a memorandum of the route, according to the Portuguese narrator.

From the port of the Holy Ghost, (*Espiritu Santo*,) he says, the army marched round the bay about two leagues, and came to the town of Ucita; from thence they went thirty leagues to the coast of Paracoxi; marching on through the small villages Acela and Jocaste, they came to Cale;

quitting Cale they passed through Itara and Potano, and on the third day came to Utimama. They next came to a habitation, which, he says, the Spaniards called de Mala Paz; and from thence went to Cholupaba. Here they crossed a river, and having marched two days, arrived at Caliquen; five days' march brought them to Napetaca; continuing on by Pelaya, they next reached Uzachil; in two days' march they came to Axille. Having crossed a river they halted in Vitachuco, a village of the province of Palache; passing through the town of Uzelu, they came to Anhayca of Palache, where they went into winter quarters. He states here, that the sea was only ten leagues distant from this place.

On the third of March, they left Anhayca of Palache, and came to Capachiqui on the eleventh: continuing on, they arrived at Toalli on the twenty-first of the same month. Quitting Toalli the twenty-third, they crossed a river and came to Achese: resuming their journey on the first of April, they were at Altaraca on the fourth, and arrived at Ocute on the tenth; and passing through Cofaqui came to Patofa. The writer here observes, that it is fifty leagues from Ocute to Patofa, and not less than three hundred and sixty leagues from Ocute to Espiritu Santo.

Leaving Patofa, they marched nine days, at the rate of seven or eight leagues a day, crossing two large rivers, and encamped in a desert: from hence they marched about twelve or thirteen leagues down the banks of a river, and came to a small village called Aymay: they next arrived at the province of Cutifachiqui, two days' journey distant from Aymay: departing from Cutifachiqui, they marched a hundred leagues in this province, and came to Chalaque: a journey of five days more brought them to the province of Xualla. The narrator observes here, that from Ocute to Cutifachiqui it is reckoned a hundred and thirty leagues, and from Cutifachiqui to Xualla, two hundred and fifty. Quitting Xualla, they came, in five days, to Quaxule: two days' march brought them to Canasaqua. They journeyed on five days and came to Chiaha: the next town they reached was Acoste, seven days' journey distant. On the ninth of July the army left Acoste, and went to Tali, and thence to Coza, where they arrived on the fifteenth: they departed from Coza on the twentieth, and passing through Tallimuchase, Ulliballi and Toasi, arrived at Tallise on the eighteenth of September. The narrator

remarks in this place, that they usually marched five or six leagues a day in uninhabited countries; but that in the wilderness they journeyed as fast as possible, lest they should be straitened for want of provision. He says, it is computed that Tascaluza is twenty leagues south of Cosa; Cosa one hundred and eighty leagues west of Xualla; Xualla two hundred and fifty leagues north of Cutifachiqui; Cutifachiqui four hundred and thirty leagues north-east of Palache, and Palache one hundred west from Espiritu Santo. Leaving Tallise, the Spaniards passed through Casiste, and came to the town of Piache, here they crossed a wide river, and continuing on, arrived at Maville the eighteenth of October; they departed from Maville on the eighteenth of November, and in five days entered the province of Pafallaya. Passing through the village of Taliepatave and Cabusto, and crossing a wide river, they arrived at Chicasa on the eighteenth of December, where they went into winter quarters.

Resuming their march in the spring they came to the village of Alimamu, and after seven days arrived at Quizquiz;—a march of half a league further brought them to the Mississippi. From Tascaluza to the great river, observes the Portuguese, we reckon three hundred leagues. Crossing this river they marched a league and a half to a village in the province of Aquixo: continuing on they came to the village of Casqui. They next reached the village of Pacaha, about a day's journey distant from Casqui: returning to the latter place they continued their march and arrived at Quigate, which was one hundred and twenty leagues from Pacaha. Quitting Quigate they marched about forty leagues to the province of Coligoa; five days more brought them to Palisema. They next came to Tafalicoya; four days' journey distant was the province of Cayas, which they entered, and halted in the town of Tanico. After a march of three days they came to Tulla; they next arrived, at the end of five days, at Quipana. Continuing onward they passed through Anoixi and Catamaya and arrived at Autiamque, where they passed the winter.

Departing from Autiamque on the sixth of March, they passed through the province of Ayays and came to the town of Tultelpina. After three days' march they arrived at Tianto, and the next day, the fifteenth of March, came to Nilco; soon after, they reached Guachoya, where De Soto died.

Luis de Moscoso set out on the fifth of June, and passing through the province of Catalte arrived at Chaguata on the twentieth. Three days' journey from thence brought them to the province of Aguacay. They continued on, and passing by Pato, on the fourth day came to the province of Maye: they next reached Naguatex. At the end of three days' march they came to the small hamlet of Missobone: thence they passed through Lacane, Mondacao and the province of Ayays, and arrived at Socatino. After twenty days' march they came to the province of Guasco. They continued on to the river Daycao, ten days' journey from Guasco, where they arrived in the beginning of October. The Portuguese says here, that from Daycao to the great river it was one hundred and fifty leagues, which they travelled, marching always to the westward.

From hence they set out on their return, and passing through Naguatex, Chaguata and the town of Cilano arrived at Nilco in the beginning of December: from thence they went two days' journey to Minoya. Here they embarked upon the Mississippi. Their course, says the narrator, continued seventeen days, during which they travelled two hundred and fifty leagues.

THE END.

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VI.	{ Life and Voyages of Columbus ending with page 481 (<i>a cancel</i>)	{ Christopher Columbus.
VII.	{ Columbus (<i>beginning</i> at page 481) and his Companions.	{ Isabella of Castile.
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